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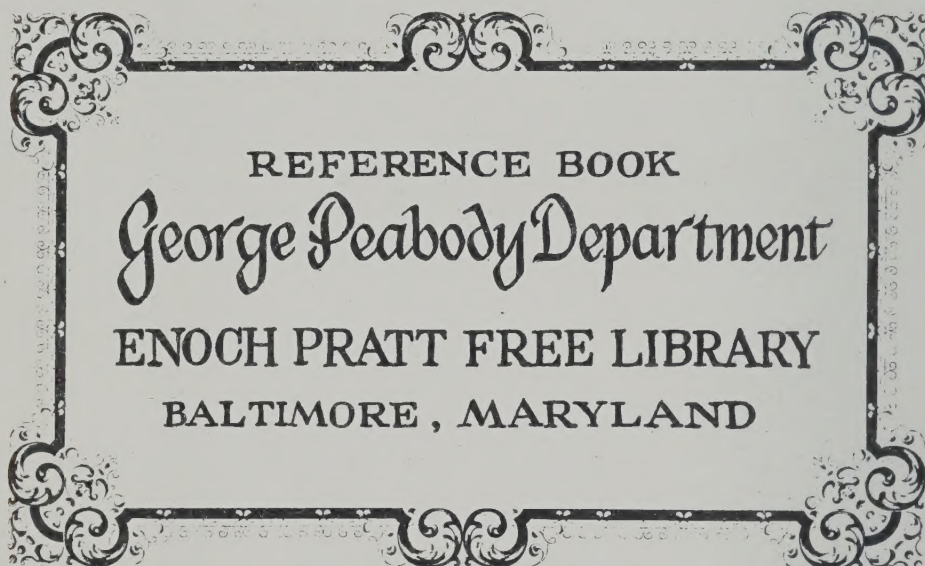
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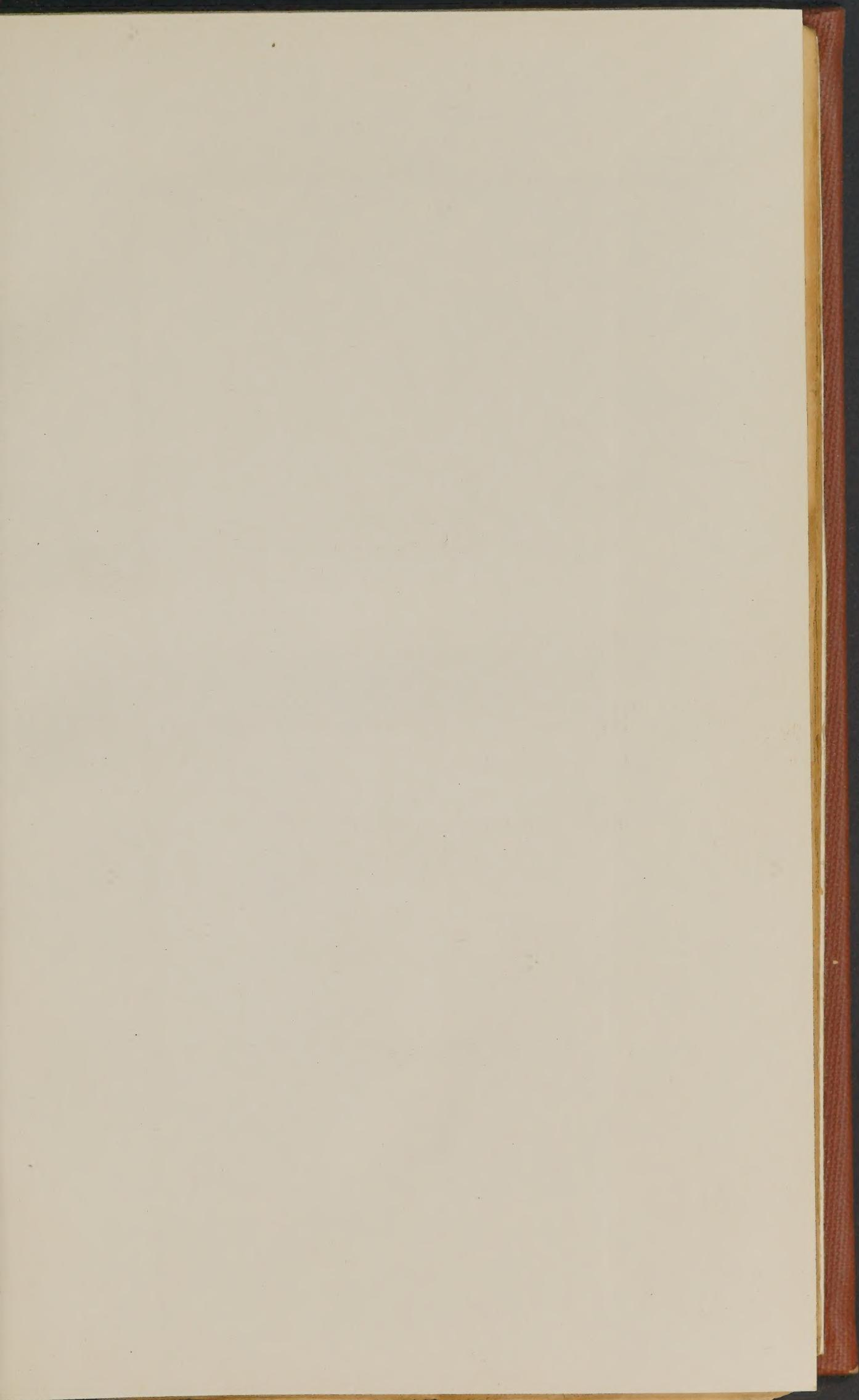
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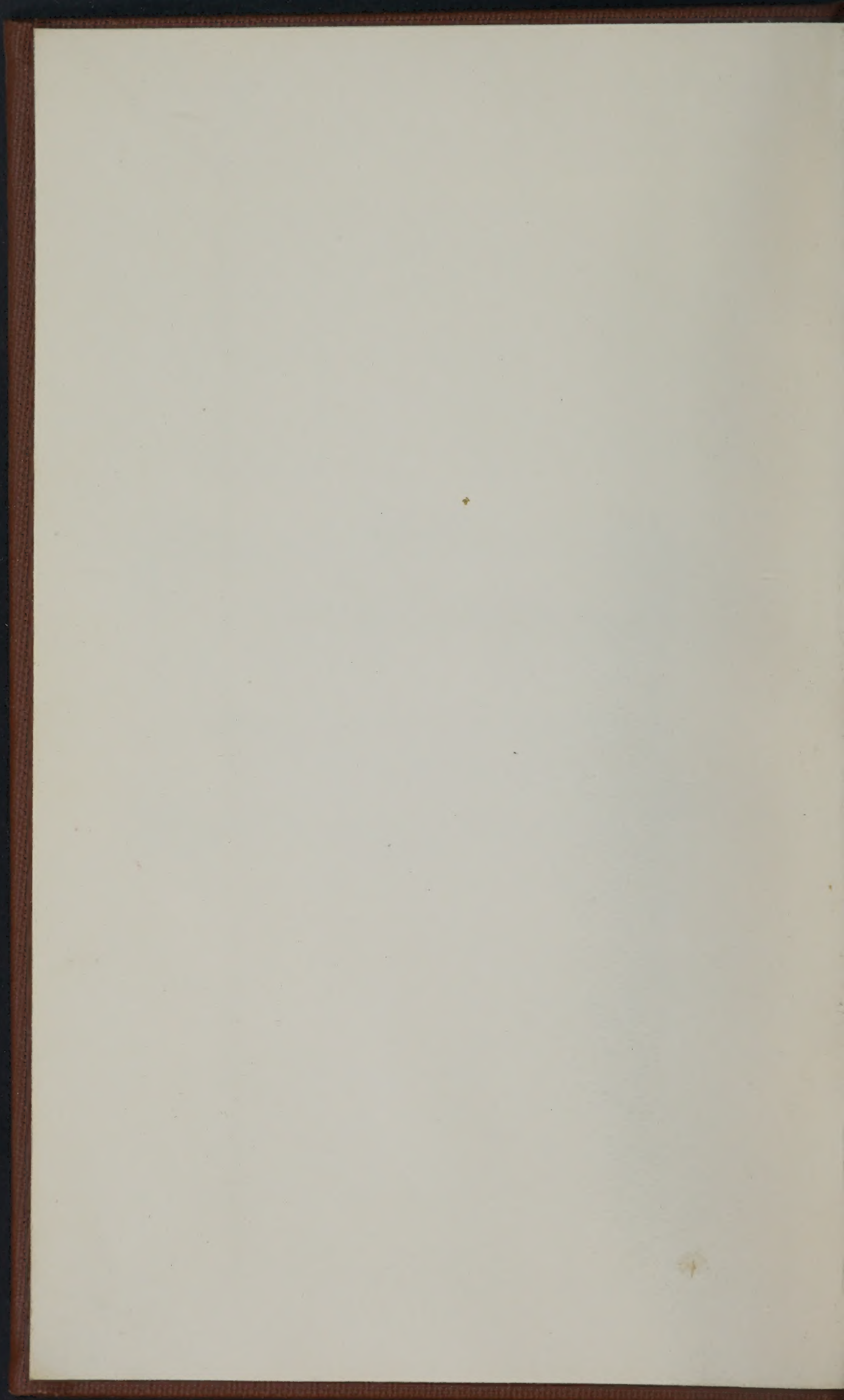
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LIFE OF VOLTAIRE.

LIFE OF VOLTAIRE

WITH A HISTORY OF HIS TIMES

AND

ANECDOTES AND CHARACTERS

OF VOLTAIRE

BY J. G. LECLERC

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON

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1764

THE
LIFE OF VOLTAIRE,

WITH INTERESTING PARTICULARS RESPECTING

HIS DEATH,

AND

ANECDOTES AND CHARACTERS

OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

By FRANK HALL STANDISH, Esq.

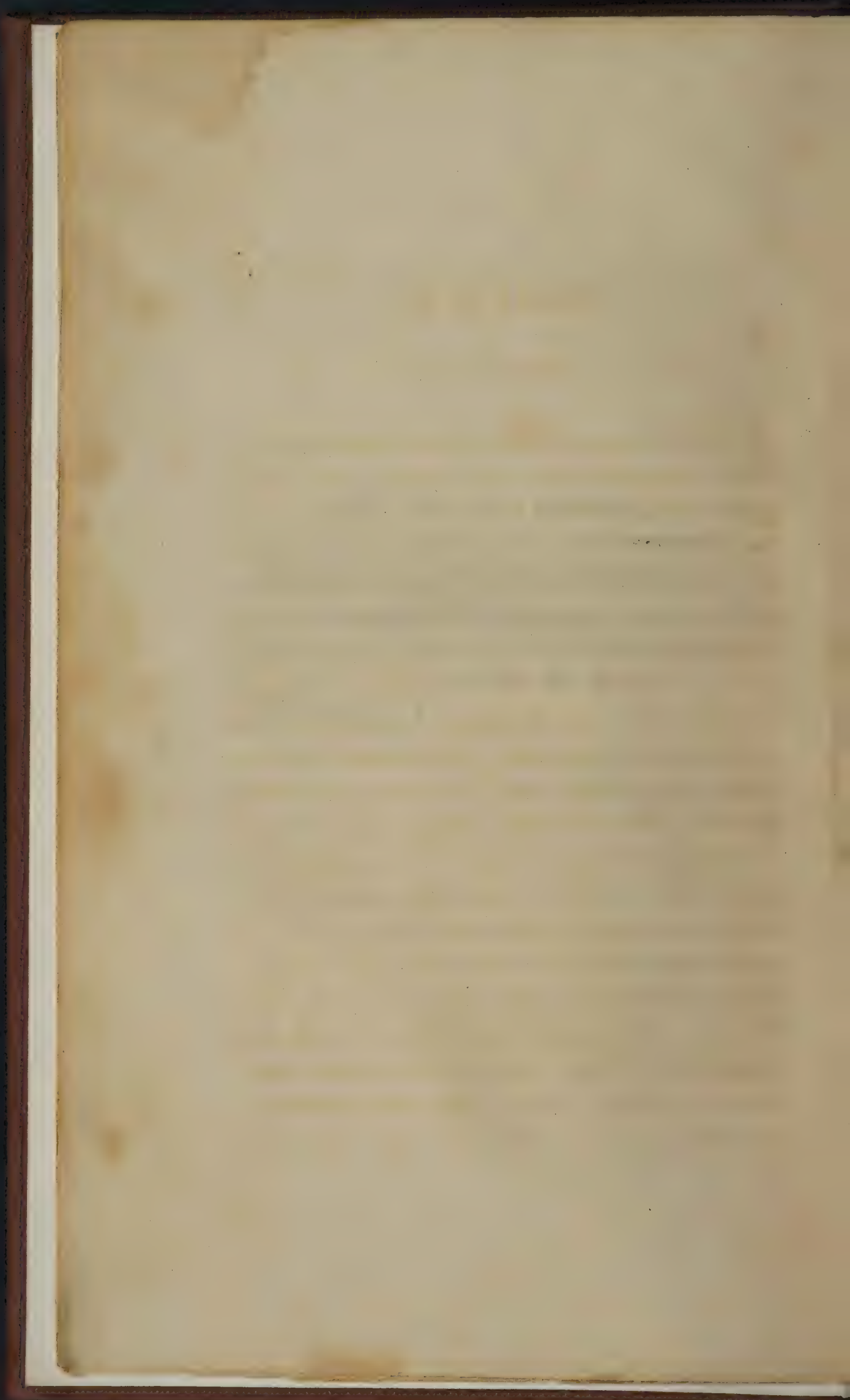
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TO
JAMES PILLANS, ESQ.,
PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, AND F.R.S.E.,
THE FOLLOWING WORK IS DEDICATED,
AS A TOKEN OF
RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER,
GRATITUDE FOR HIS SERVICES, AND ESTEEM FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP,
BY HIS MOST OBLIGED AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,
F. H. STANDISH.



PREFACE.

THE History of the Life of Voltaire necessarily comprehends in a general view great part of the political and literary occurrences in Europe, during the eighteenth century. In this work, however, I have confined myself to much the same course as his biographers have already pursued, occasionally giving sketches of the characters of those who were his most determined antagonists, or most devoted admirers. It has not been my wish to enlarge more on the speculative opinions disseminated among many of the writings, to which I have been obliged occasionally to refer, than the nature of my subject required: I, therefore, hope that some allowances will be made in that respect. The first chapter has been compiled with the view of acquainting the reader with the despotism of the clergy, and the state of affairs in France during the two centuries previous to that with which my pages are

connected. The trial of Urbain Grandier, the curate of Loudon, has been for a like reason inserted. I intend not to depreciate the ecclesiastical profession; for there exists no class of men from whom all communities might derive so much profit as from clergymen, as long as they execute their functions with propriety. I have seldom given notes; for the bare facts of my narrative may be found in all the French *Lives of Voltaire*; and the arrangement and opinions are exclusively my own. In the first chapter, I have made my acknowledgments where I have consulted other authors. To the Abbé Millot I am indebted for some notices on the reign of Louis XIV. After all, a work of this nature must be incomplete, and liable to inaccuracies: I dismiss it, however, with the consolation, that whatever sentence may be pronounced, through the work, upon the author, he has experienced pleasure and advantages during its composition, which the adventitious circumstances of rank, or fortune, are unable to procure for their most pampered possessors.

INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER.

SOME remarks on the state of France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before entering on the immediate subject of the following pages, will enable the Reader more completely to appreciate the miseries under which that nation laboured previous to the appearance of Voltaire, and to more readily estimate the value of any exertions he may have used in the removal of errors and superstitious prejudices; and, in tracing the great political events which occurred during these same periods, we shall be made acquainted with those transactions which influenced, though not in an apparently immediate degree, the advancement and subsequent refinement of the ideas in which

we indulge on many subjects. The notions, indeed, of antiquity, only appear strange and unaccountable from the contrast with the modern; and even at present, when we consider the different views which are taken of morals or philosophy, from those which engaged the disputes and speculations, or the pleasures of some past centuries, we are by necessity obliged to humble our triumphant tone of investigation, and proportion the diffidence of decision to the importance of the discovery which we attempt. The greatest revolution which occurred during these periods, favourable to the cause of literature and the progress of knowledge, and which ultimately led to its present advanced state towards perfection, was occasioned by the Reformation, or establishment of the Protestant religion, and also by the discovery of printing, which happened nearly about the same periods. This art appears to have been to a certain degree in use among the ancient Romans, as is indicated by some old rings bearing the signatures most probably of their owner; but their idea of the advantages attending it, seems to have been extremely

limited and confined, although hinted at by Cicero in one of his philosophical works *.

However, there is every reason to believe, that in this invention, as well as in most others, the advantages which have subsequently taken place, have benefitted the art itself as much as the art has been of advantage to mankind; therefore the question of its origin may not be of so much importance. Mr. Bowyer, in his *History of Printing*, adjudges the credit of its modern discovery to the three cities of Haerlem, Mentz, and Strasbourg. The first of these may be entitled to the highest honours of its introduction, though all of them may presume to claim it in a qualified sense, on account of the improvements each has borrowed from the other. Laurentius Coster, of Haerlem, made, it is supposed, his first essay about the year 1430, but he proceeded no further than to separate letters cut in wood. He died ten years afterwards, having first printed the *Horarium*, the *Speculum Bellicum*, and two different editions of *Donatus* †. The first Latin Bible, with metallic types, came

* *De Naturâ Deorum*.

† *History of Inventions*, by Williams, London, 8vo. 1820. vol. ii.

out in 1450, and must have occupied at least seven or eight years. From Europe printing was carried to almost every part of Asia, Africa, and America.

After this slight preface we may proceed to the second cause of the progress of knowledge, the establishment of the Protestant religion. A member of the catholic church was the instigator of this most important revolution; and the weakness and intolerable weight of the priesthood and its religious principles, more quickly contributed to the destruction of its own body. The progress of the new creed was, however, as violently opposed as the united force of religious zeal and worldly interest could operate against what was supposed to be little better than infidelity and ruin; and much blood was shed in a cause, the advantages of which, except in some political instances connected with the advancement of learning, has scarcely recompensed for the horrors of its introduction; every new system, however, obtains converts, and, as persecution adds great influence to faith, the persuasion was speedily propagated. The Pope had been hitherto armed with the keys of heaven, and the delegated divinity of St. Peter,

and the secular power was at hand, ready to assist spiritual. He was an enemy before whom most the retreated, either through policy or fear. His dominions were ample, and his coffers were filled by the devoted monarchs of Europe. A foreign invasion of his rights, either in the field, or the cabinet, would not have succeeded, even if it had been attempted; and it was accordingly reserved for a member of the church of Rome, and one subject to the papal supremacy, to diminish the dignity and splendour of the holy See.

Leo X., in 1517, having occasion for a large sum of money, either to prosecute a war against the Turks, or for some more private purposes, had recourse to the sale of indulgences, or passports into the other world, as a means of furnishing himself with supplies. They were publicly exposed for sale by auction, in the most indecent and scandalous manner, in the shops, and even in the places of public amusement, throughout most of the countries where the catholic religion prevailed, and were intrusted for circulation to the Dominican monks in Germany, to the prejudice of the Augustins, who considered this traffick as

a peculiar privilege of their own order; such, however, was the power of the clergy, and the grossness of the credulity and delusion under which the people laboured, that even this imposition would only have excited slight murmurs, had not the Augustins interfered, considering themselves as individually injured.

Luther was one of those, whose history is no less singular previous to the changes with which he was connected. He was born in Saxony, in the year 1483, the night before the fast-day of Saint Martin, from which his christian name is derived. It is asserted by a catholic writer, and was the common belief of the times, that his mother conceived him from the embraces of the devil, before she was married to his father, though in what way she was impregnated, whether in body, or in mind, is not asserted. Early filled with a desire for the acquisition of knowledge, and indefatigable activity in its pursuit, he was sent to the college of Magdebourg; where he passed the early part of his life. When his judgment was, however, more matured, he turned his attention to the jurisprudence of the empire.

Chance, which appears to be invariably and inconceivably connected with the most important occurrences, and which baffles all the calculations of probability or experience, caused him to embrace the profession of a monk, and the faith from which he so soon dissented. Once, when walking with a friend, a thunderbolt fell and destroyed his companion. Luther was alarmed at an occurrence which science could not then explain; his doubts reposed on the easy pillow of belief in a divine interposition, he forsook the study of the law, for the contemplation of the good works of the martyrs; and, by dedicating himself to God, and obeying the impulse of his fear, he vainly imagined, that he was following an inspiration from above. He accordingly entered into the order of the Augustins, then in great repute as godly men and hermits, in the town of Erfurt in Thuringia, to the extreme surprise of all his previous acquaintances, who could not account for a conversion so sudden, Martin never having been before remarkable for his piety. Having passed the steps of the novitiate for this society, he lived in it steadily and well for four years; at

the end of which time he was called to the university of Wittemberg, founded by the Duke Frederic of Saxony, where he taught the public classes for three years; and at this period, the sale of the indulgences attracted his notice.

He soon, however, passed from the quicksand of these abuses to an investigation of the still more perilous shoals of the mysteries and doctrines of the Romish faith. Saxony, Denmark and Sweden embraced the new religion he disseminated, and Zwingle* adding to the innovations of Luther, brought over the greatest part of Switzerland. In defiance of his previous vow of celibacy, and like Luther, he married, whose wife was formerly a nun, having been seduced from a convent by one Leonard Roppen, and subsequently existing as a common prostitute among the scholars of Wittemberg†. Like him, also, Zwingle abolished masses;

* The memory of Zwingle is still held in reverence by the inhabitants of Zurich. His portrait adorns their library, although the countenance bears much stronger expressions of ferocity than devotion, to the judgment of a casual observer.

† Nommée Catherine de Bore, il en fit sa femme après qu'elle eut esté tout ce temps, vivant à Wittemberg vagabonde parmy les écoliers, comme une asnesse." *Histoire des Vies de Trois Principaux Hérétiques*. Imprimée à Douay, 1616.

for Luther had asserted, unlike the prophets of old, that his reputed father the devil, had appeared to him, and had proved that they were idolatrous. Though such opinions did not individually spring from the actual state of learning, yet the boldness of his conjectures, and the energy of his character excited investigation; and sometimes truth is found in what originally appears to be extravagance. The princes of Europe finally availed themselves of the opportunity his doctrines gave, to seize on some of the ecclesiastical possessions, and no longer enrich Rome at the expense of their own dominions.

The Pope, in the first instance, might have gained the innovator over to his interest; but he despised him, and in 1520, the audacious propagator of the reformed worship was excommunicated. Supported by Frederic Duke of Saxony, and animated by hatred to the Pope, he became an irreconcilable enemy to his faith and his opinions. In 1536, Calvin*, who was a

* The fort of Calvin, in which he defended himself against his enemies during the religious wars in Switzerland, is still to be seen at Pregny, about two leagues from Geneva. It is the property of Mr. Jacquier, a man deservedly respected, and of a good Swiss family.

convert to Luther, and a clergyman of Noyon in France, found himself obliged to leave his country on account of his religious principles. He retired to Geneva, and regulated those of the inhabitants of that town. He in some respects dissented from the tenets of Luther; almost entirely divesting religious adoration of all ceremony, his system superseded that of the original founder and was introduced into France, Holland, and England. The opposition to its reception, however, was very violent, and under Francis II., who succeeded to the throne of France at the age of sixteen years, began those wars of religion, which were the greatest scourge that kingdom ever experienced. These conflicts raged with the utmost impetuosity under the succeeding reigns of Charles IX. and Henry III. Catherine de Medicis, the mother and guardian of Francis II., fomented the disturbances. In 1561, under Charles IX., the Jesuits were established, who subsequently became so formidable a body.

During the glorious and romantic, but uncertain life of Henry IV., the least attack or jest on the

opinions of the priests exposed the author to the risk of the scaffold, or the stake ; and at this time superstition, the unnatural daughter of Christianity, traversed the world with a torch in one hand and a dagger in the other, sacrificing all who disputed her dominion, and leaving in her train marks of ruin, madness, and desolation.

The disputes between the Catholics and Calvinists led to the destruction of those who would not embrace a party ; and the king, although a conqueror, was not acknowledged by many of his subjects on account of his religious opinions. An absolution from the Pope, the establishment of a convent in every province of his dominions, and the strict fulfilment of the articles of the council of Trent, were found to be the best means of reconciliation. Under his government, literature was respected, and those devoted to it were honoured ; for though the turbulence of the priests sometimes caused his displeasure, he treated all ranks with justice ; and all sects with toleration. The moderation of his temper and the goodness of his heart, may be collected from the following anecdote, and his gallantry from the letters of his

favourites* :—“ Soon after he had made himself master of the throne of France, some of the adverse factious party of the League, whom he had pardoned, continued to threaten his life and abuse his character ; but when it was proposed to bring them to punishment, he said, ‘ No ; give them time, they are still angry †.’ At length, however, he fell a victim to the fanaticism of one who considered he fulfilled his duty in sacrificing a Huguenot, and the part of a martyr in assassinating

* The following is a letter of the famous Gabrielle D'Estrées to the king.

“ Paris, 25 Janvier, 1596.

“ Je meurs de peur, rassurés moi en me disant comment se porte Le Plus Brave du monde. Je crains que son mal ne soit grand, puisque autre chose ne devoit me priver de sa présence. Dis m'en des nouvelles, mon cavalier, d'austant que tu scays combien le moindre de tes maux m'est mortel. Quoy que aujourd'huy j'ay reçu deuxfois de vos nouvelles je ne saurois dormir sans vous envoyer mille-bonsoirs : car je ne suys pas douée d'une ladre constance. Je m'appelle la Princesse Constante, et je vis sensible pour tout ce qui vous trouble ; insensible à tout ce qui reste au monde.”

The letters of the Marquise de Verneuil to her lover are still more amorous : she makes use of the following notable expressions.

“ Je ne vous parle ici que par soupirs, ô mon roi, mon amant, mon tout ; car pour mes autres plaintes secrettes, votre majesté les peut sourdement entendre de ma pensée, puisque vous connoissez aussi bien mon ame que mon corps.”—See *Vie Militaire et Privée d'Henry IV. à Paris*, 1803.

† “ Non” dit il “ il faut attendre ils sont encore fachés.”

a heretic. Henry was destroyed in a barbarous age, amongst a still more barbarous nation, leaving a name in the page of history which, like a beautiful meteor playing along a stormy sky, appears more vivid and brilliant from the surrounding darkness. Even his enlightened notions were, however, unable to prevent the execution of witches and magicians, and the processions and miracles of the League had so ingrafted these foolish superstitions on the minds of the people, that as his predecessor was judged criminal for his indifference, or rather mercy, to such unfortunate wretches, he found himself compelled to put the execution of the law into the hands of the priests whenever an opportunity of punishment occurred.

The primitive Christians may bring examples of martyrdom, or instances of heroic contumacy in persecution and death; but never has a more intolerable cause for remonstrance existed than the articles we peruse in the laws for the prevention of sorcery even in more recent centuries; and the mind of the Christian revolts at the white banners of his creed having been un-

furled to screen the ignorance and malice of the self-denominated expounders of the Gospel. The argument of the state of ignorance under which mankind at that time laboured is here insufficient and inconclusive; and reflection, aided by reason, has caused some to believe, that the doctrines of a belief cannot be pure which lead to the destruction of those among whom it is introduced. The example of the priesthood has explained the paradox, that those who suffered tortures* with the greatest apathy in the cause of their belief were equally cruel to all dissenters in their own party. Charges most ridiculous were considered as con-

* Should the reader wish for any further information on this head, I may be permitted to refer him to the work of *Gallonius, de S.S. Martyrum Cruciatibus, Antverpiæ, 1670; Lipsius de Cruce, Amstelodami, 1670; and the works of Nicquetus and Bartholinus de Cruce Christi, Amstelodami, 1670.* In the first mentioned of these works he will find forty-three different modes said to be employed by the infidels in torturing the martyrs. Indeed, every variation that human ingenuity could invent, from labour on the high roads to being clothed in red-hot shirts of iron. One of the saints is represented about to be tied up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a monkey, and a snake, and to be thrown into a river with these agreeable companions. In Lipsius he will find, chap. 6., a droll picture of a man impaled. The stake introduced through the rectum, and coming out of the mouth, while the legs are in the grotesque attitudes of dancing.

clusive against the accused; and Boguet, who in 1598 revised the criminal code relating to witchcraft, does not hesitate to allow the same degree of credit to the perjured witnesses against the supposed magician, as to the just in his behalf. Testimony of the son was also heard in evidence against that of the father; those suspected of any intercourse, either intellectual, or corporal, with evil spirits, were put to the torture in order to extract the truth, or force a confession. Persons of both sexes were diligently searched, in order to detect the marks they were supposed to receive from the devil as his slaves, which were always imagined to exist imprinted on the most private parts of their bodies. The Loups-Garoux, or those who changed themselves into wild beasts, were burned alive; and the Nouveurs d'Aiguillettes, who were supposed to deprive their victims of the procreative powers bestowed on them by nature, were first strangled and then consumed. The hypocrisy of the monks assisted the delusion of the people*; and it may not be uninteresting to observe, that

* *Notes on the Devil's Sabbath. Garinet, Histoire de la Magie.* Paris, 1818, 8vo.

the scenes for the nocturnal meetings of the accused with the devil, were laid near their own convents.

No doubt can exist that some ignorant people imagined themselves possessed by, and capable of exercising, the powers of magic, and conceived they had enjoyed familiar intercourses with the devil. It is not impossible, according to the opinion of one modern writer on magic*, but that many of the monks have occasionally counterfeited the arch-fiend, by way of indulging their lust, or beguiling hours of idleness and inactivity.

During the weak and impotent reign of Louis XIII., the wars of religion were renewed with much bitterness, and the effusion of blood only served to exasperate the passions of the contending parties. The catholic zealots bore with impatience, and regarded with distrust, the liberty which the Calvinists had obtained by the edict of Nantes, and the others, with an equal spirit of opposition, used all their powers in the assertion of their privileges. The king had deprived them of some ecclesiastical possessions at Bearn; and, though

* *Garinet, Histoire de la Magie.* Paris, 1818, 8vo.

an equivalent was offered in his dominions, they asserted their pretensions to the original property (which had been in their possession for sixty years), with the Bible and the sword as their advocates. A plan was formed at La Rochelle to change France into a Republic; and, with the Duke de Rohan at their head, they obliged Louis to accede to their demands, and by this means appease the subjects whom he had the right to command; and the Calvinists ultimately obtained the power of exercising liberty of conscience without the fear of opposition.

Under this reign the passion for duelling was carried to the greatest extent; no less than 8,000 letters of pardon had been granted in about the space of twenty years to the survivors in these quarrels, the origin of which appears a custom more difficult to trace to the foundation than any of those we may refer to an age of barbarism. The examples of this kind of respect paid to honour and disregard for life, are rare among the ancients; but the introduction of Christianity, or, more properly speaking, the abuses arising from its introduction, have given a degree of sanctity to the solemn

appeal which is made when a champion stakes his existence in vindication of his cause. The opinions of the world, which are even more arbitrary than those of our religion, have given a still greater degree of weight to this exhibition of courage, and by degrees the survivor of the contest has been considered as the innocent person. The custom is descended to our times, with little of the injustice abated, though it has lost, in the tradition, many of its chivalrous attributes*. There are at present no brave knights, who with pleasure risk their precious lives, or limbs, for the honour of the damsels they adore, to receive the reward of their contests at the expense of the visionary treasure they defend; all is now settled with regard to the fair sex, by the more powerful assistance of interest, or inclination; there is no necessity for subduing a giant to gain a mistress, and a drunken friend is the modern cause of a too often fatal quarrel. There are always, however, to be found some

* See SAINT PALAYE, and *Dissertation sur la Chevalerie*, par BASNAGE; avec un *Discours préliminaire*, par PIERRE ROQUES; à Basle, 1740. In these works will be found many curious laws relating to duelling.

who are ready to aggravate animosities under the name of honour, or satisfaction, though they should terminate in the destruction of those to whom they are indebted for half their existence, or support.

Henry II. had, at the commencement of his reign, been witness to an engagement in which one of his favourites was slain; and, touched with sorrow for his loss, more than by a general and enlightened view of the subject, he made an oath not to allow others such arrangements in future, and issued an ordinance for their prohibition; which, however, was regarded with little attention. Henry IV., who himself was possessed of the highest personal courage, never interfered, except when obliged from necessity, or the publicity of the business. In 1602, another law was promulgated to the effect of its abolition, and the severity of Louis and his minister, Richelieu, in a great measure extirpated an abuse which the influence of humanity and reason, and the progress of knowledge may be alone supposed capable of entirely correcting.

The ancient laws of honour were as fantastic as their execution was barbarous; and there appears

to be a strange mixture of devotion, ferocity, and superstition, in an engagement, the origin of which reason did not dictate and cannot explain. Before the combat, an oath was administered, that those about to enter the lists would not avail themselves of the assistance of the devil, or of necromancy, and relied for success on the goodness of their weapons and their cause ; and, to describe the excellence of an accomplished knight, it was said, that no one better understood how to break a lance, or kiss a lady. The crusades had redoubled the heroism of the knights : a kind of enthusiasm had mingled itself with ideas of religion and glory which incited them to the most hazardous enterprises, and chivalry had so ennobled love that it rendered it a passion purely heroic. In the *Roman de la Rose*, it is affirmed, that the knights were more estimable, and the ladies lived better and more chastely on that account :

Les chevaliers mieux en valaient,
Les dames meilleures étoient
Et plus chastement en vivaient.

Far from regarding love as a criminal passion, they associated it with the ideas and practices of

devotion. A troubadour of the thirteenth century said that he burned tapers, and caused masses to be said, for the success of his desires. The mistress of the Lord of Croan, when upon her death-bed, ready to receive the sacrament, called God to witness, that Croan had never made a request to her that her father might not have exacted. "Not," said she, "that he slept not in my bed, but in sooth, without misbehaviour, or the indulgence of evil thoughts*." Notwithstanding love was not always pure, even in the times when this passion was carried to its highest point of heroism, it became insensibly debased.

In the fifteenth century, Eustace Deschamps often complained, that luxury had effeminated the knights; that they thought to please more by their dress than by their exploits and virtues; and that gallantry, as well as chivalry, had declined in a wondrous manner. Notwithstanding, in this century they fought nation against nation for the honour of the ladies; and, in 1402, seven French knights engaged against seven English for a like

* "Non," dit-elle, "qu'il ne couchât en mon lit, mais afin sans vilenie et sans mal y penser."

reason. In the end, all this heroism was eclipsed. Brantome says, that in the sixteenth century love was nothing more than libertinism : it was the age of devices and amorous emblems. From this period we hear no more of heroic loves. Devout loves still existed when the general manners wore the livery of devotion ; when lovers, by way of gallantry, whipped themselves under the windows of their mistresses. Men carried in their breviaries, under the figure of the Virgin Mary, the portrait of the women whom they loved, and the women had that of their lovers, under the representation of Christ, or some saint.

From the whole of this discussion, it appears, that love was simple and tender in the tenth century ; severe and impassioned in the eleventh ; that it participated of the heroic and superstitious enthusiasm of the three following centuries, and sometimes elevated itself even to a virtue ; but in the fifteenth century declined till it was almost always a vice, and scarcely ever a passion. In the sixteenth century, the sentiments which mingled with it were subtle and cold ; the ideas of piety which were from time to time allied, instead of

warming and ennobling as before, completed its degradation by introducing all the meannesses of superstition and hypocrisy. The other forms which it has subsequently assumed, show that it has constantly followed the modifications of society. Thus love, in all times subject to fashion (which seems to have so little empire over the passions), has perpetually undergone the same variations as exterior manners and customs*.

After this digression, I proceed to mention an institution, most excellent in itself, and most honourable to France. The establishment of the Academy at Paris, in 1636, was the work of Richelieu, who founded it in spite of the opposition of the king and the parliament; and it was not till the following year, that the latter gave a reluctant approval to its continuance. The exertions of the members, however, were limited to the embellishment and augmentation of the French language. All discussions of natural history or disquisitions on subjects of philosophy were expressly forbidden. In time however, these prohibitions gave way, and the

* See Fosbroke, on Monachism. 4to, London, 1817.

society enlightened the ideas, and became the ornament of the nation among whom it was established.

Some gleams of intellectual brightness had now begun to appear; and the progress of the fine arts, which were at present much cultivated, was attended by the dissemination of knowledge over the face of Europe. During this period, Malesherbes and Corneille, in a great degree, formed the poetry of their countrymen. Descartes had, by a new mode of reasoning, opened the way to truth; and Galileo, in Italy, had shown the movement of the earth round the sun. He was, however, imprisoned for having studied the stars; and the parliament of Paris forbade, under pain of death, any one to teach maxims which were contrary to those of Aristotle.

The prosecution of Théophile de Viand and the condemnation of Urbain Grandier, the curate of Loudon, which occurred about the same time, are lasting marks of the malevolence of the Jesuits, and the ignorance and vengeance of the court of France.

Théophile de Viand was the most fashionable wit of the age. Although he had no office at

court, he was well received there, and lived in habits of intimacy with its members. The young king was pleased when he conversed with, or listened to him; and this favour, which added nothing to his fortune, was the cause of his ruin. The Jesuit Gaussin was his enemy, and, as confessor to the king, whispered destruction in the ear of his penitent. Théophile was accused of atheism, and the judge of the châtelet condemned him to be burnt alive. By a precipitate flight he escaped from his enemies, and the execution was performed in effigy. He was finally, however, seized by the lieutenant of the police (who was in the pay of his persecutors) on the borders of France, and plunged into the same dungeon which had been allotted to Ravillac, the assassin of Henry IV. During the preparations for his trial, the Jesuits let loose their vengeance against the poet. Spies, to find out what he had never said, and preachers, to declaim against what he had never committed, were employed in every coffee-house and every church. The holy father Garasse printed a sermon accusing him of the only crime which an appeal to his honour could not clear, and of atheism; and his colleague,

Guerin, preached what the other had written*. Neither their malice nor their power, however, were capable of procuring his condemnation, and witnesses came forward to prove his strict observance of the duties imposed upon good catholics. The Duke of Montmorency received in the arms of his family this victim to the malicious persecution of perverted religious principles; where he died, soon after his reception, from the injuries he had experienced, and the sufferings he had endured previous to his acquittal†.

* The following is a specimen of the style of the orator, given by Duvernet :

“ Lisez mes frères,” leur criait-il en prêchant, “ lisez le révérend père Garasse. Je dis que vous le lisiez et que vous n’y manquez pas. C’est un très-bon livre; vous y verrez ces paroles. ‘ Maudit sois-tu Théophile, maudit soit l’esprit qui t’a dicté tes pensées, maudit soit la main qui les a écrites; malheureux le libraire qui les a imprimés, malheureux ceux qui les ont lues, malheureux ceux qui t’ont jamais connu, et béni soit M. le Premier Président, et béni soit M. le Procureur Général, qui ont purgé Paris de cette peste. Je dirai d’après le révérend père Garasse, que tu es un veau. Que dis-je? D’un veau la chair en est bonne rotie, la chair en est bonne bouillie. De sa peau on en couvre des livres; mais la tienne méchant n’est bonne qu’à être grillée. Aussi le seras-tu demain. Tu t’es moqué des moines, et les moines se moqueront de toi.’ ”

* Duvernet, *Notes à la Vie de Voltaire*; page 120. Edit. de Genève, 1786.

The other trial, to which we are now brought by the train of the subject, will for ever cast a stain over the beginning of the seventeenth century;—it might almost be said over the religion, the country, and the minister who directed the proceedings.

The personal hatred and the policy of Richelieu, condemned to the rack and the fire a priest, whose greatest crime might, perhaps, be a levity of conduct amply atoned for by his talents and his piety.

Urbain Grandier, born of a respectable family, and possessed of personal advantages and talents not generally bestowed, had obtained great credit as an orator at Loudon, of which he was the curate. He soon excited the envy of his rivals: civil and kind to his friends, he had not the policy to conceal from his adversaries the pride which the consciousness of superior abilities gives to personal dislike. Being appointed to execute a sentence of the law against a priest of the name of Monnier, he caused it to be performed with the greatest rigour. This man, joined with another of the name of Mignon, against whom the curate of Loudon had gained a law-suit, and who was the

director of the convent of the Ursulines. The natural passion which Grandier possessed for gallantry, and the advantages of his address, enabled him to obtain great favours from a young girl at Loudon, a daughter to the procureur to the king. It was in vain that a kind friend asserted, that he was the father of a female infant newly born; the public was, in this case, proof against deceit, and decided the accusation.

Trinquant, the father of the girl and uncle to Mignon, was at the head of a league to which the advocate of the king, who was the rival of Grandier, joined himself. They bribed two persons, who accused the curate of debauchery in his own church with several young girls and married women; the office for justice received the complaint, and appointed an investigation. Whilst the law-suit was conducting, Grandier was insulted during the performance of his sacerdotal duties by a man of the name of Thibaut, who dared to offer him a blow. Despairing of obtaining justice in a country where he had so many enemies, he proceeded to Paris, in order to throw himself at the feet of the king

and demand justice ; but, during his absence, they obtained from the Bishop of Poitiers an order to seize his body, dated the 22d of October, 1629. Du Thibaut intrigued with such efficacy, that Grandier was obliged to go to Paris ; at his arrival he was thrown into a damp and unwholesome dungeon, and the bishop of the diocese passed a sentence the 3d of January, 1630, by which Grandier was suspended from the exercise of his sacerdotal functions for the space of five years in any part of France, and for ever at Loudon ; he was also ordered to fast on bread and water every Friday for three months. His enemies were not satisfied, and applied to the parliament, who refused to interfere, and dismissed the matter to the tribunal of Poitiers. The witnesses were examined, but varied in their testimony, and many confessed that they had been seduced by money ; the prosecution was declined, and Grandier obtained an absolution from the Bishop of Bourdeaux. Contrary to his advice, however, he commenced an action against his accusers, and Du Thibaut was condemned to several fines, and publicly reprimanded

About this time, Moussaut, who was the director of the convent of the Ursulines, died ; he was replaced by Mignon. The young nuns of the order ran about at night for their amusement or pleasure, and complained that they were possessed ; the old ones believed in good earnest what their juniors had asserted. Mignon knew the truth ; but not losing sight, for a moment, of the opportunity for destroying his enemy, he counselled these women to call for Grandier as their confessor. The curate of Loudon refused to comply, and it appears certain, that he never entered the convent ; for when the members of it were confronted with him in 1634, he was not recognised by a single individual. Mignon accordingly began to exorcise ; he made a visionary priest (who was desirous of passing for a saint in the opinion of the populace) a confidant in the business ; and, in order to give greater publicity to the possession of the Ursulines, he walked in procession with his parishioners at Loudon. The two impostors arranged the plot, and when they thought, that the appearances of the possession were sufficiently complete to be examined by those not

in the secret, they chose Granger, the curate of Vesnier, a man of extraordinary impudence, to proceed and acquaint the magistrates. This ridiculous interview took place on Monday the 11th of October, 1632, with two magistrates of Loudon. They repaired to the convent to examine every thing themselves; Mignon, however, went there before them, dressed in a surplice and a stole*. He told them, that the evil spirits had been expelled; that the devil, who had been in the superior mother, was called Astaroth, and that of the lay-sister, Zabulon; but that at that time the nuns were asleep.

As the magistrates were about to depart, it was announced to them, that those bewitched were again troubled; they ascended with Mignon and Granger into a chamber at the top of the house, the superior and a lay-sister were in bed; they were surrounded by members of the community. Manouri, a surgeon, was present, with Rosseau the canon of Sainte Croix. At the sight of the officers of justice, the superior, falling into strange

* A black band, with a cross upon it.

convulsions, uttering cries which resembled those of a little pig, and making horrible grimaces, hid her head under the bed-clothes. One of the sisterhood was on her right hand and Mignon on her left; he put his two fingers into her mouth, and conjured the devil to walk out, in Latin. The possessed answered very ill to his inquiries, but pointed out Grandier as the author of her malady; the lay-sister was not willing to answer, saying, that the superior was the only one capable of so doing. The magistrates having learnt, that the matter had been already examined by Grognard, the ecclesiastical judge, took notes and a written account of the whole.

On Monday the 12th, they called Mignon in private, and told him, that the possession was a pious fraud, and that it was necessary to hinder its progress; he, however, maintained that it was real. The design of the judges was to take more exact informations; they again visited the convent, accompanied by the *Sieur Irenée*. The superior seemed convulsed with passion; Barri exorcised the demon, who replied, that he had departed; the lay-sister also assisted at the cere-

mony. Whilst they were reading the prayers of exorcism, a great noise was heard in the company; one of the assistants exclaimed, that she had seen a male cat come down the chimney; they searched for him all over the room, and found him at last under a bed, to which he had run for safety; they put him on the counterpane of the one which held the superior; Barri made several signs of the cross over the animal, who, however, was audacious enough to set up his back in spite of the Holy Ghost; he was recognised as an inmate of the convent, and imagined to be nothing less than a demon, or a magician. Though all these impositions were badly planned, Grandier feared the power of the conspiracy which was proceeding against him, which had been just reinforced by the father of Cardinal Richelieu, against whom a publication had appeared during the time of his disgrace, attributed to the pen of Grandier. He accordingly obtained an order to prevent any person slandering him; this order is of the 28th of October, 1632.

During the time that Grandier was exorcising in Paris, the evil spirits were dispersed all over

the town of Loudon; six of the girls, residing in it, fancied themselves possessed, and others that they were bewitched. In the town of Chinon, the devil, like an old friend, encamped himself in the body of two of the penitents of Barri. Laubardement, a creature of the court, being informed of this, arrived at Loudon the 6th December, 1632, at eight o'clock at night, and communicated his full powers of the court to some of the town's people. The contemporary authors thus recount the arrest of Grandier.

Guillaume Aubin, who had the jurisdiction over the ecclesiastical concerns of the district, was sent for by Laubardement; who, after having communicated to him the orders of the king, desired him to seize Grandier. Aubin informed the curate of Loudon of this secret order, and clandestinely advised him to withdraw; but he did not think it right to profit by these suggestions, and was accordingly arrested one morning, on his way to the church of Sainte Croix. Immediately after he was taken, the royal seal was affixed to all his property; they found among his papers the treatise composed on the celibacy of

the priests, which he acknowledged to be written by himself, but denied having any concern in the authorship of two poems which were also discovered. His mother in vain pleaded the sentences of absolution of the Archbishop of Bourdeaux; the inventory was finished the 31st January, 1632. Pierre Fournier, who had accepted the office of lawyer to the crown, declined acting almost immediately after his acceptation. The case, however, proceeded; but Laubardement being apprehensive that the parliament would interfere, obtained an order from the privy council for its prevention; he also threw Grandier into a prison, which was rendered as frightful and miserable as possible, and to which was added the precaution of passing bars of iron across the chimney, for fear the devil should come to the assistance and effect the escape of the magician; a woman of the name of Bontemps also watched over him in his confinement, and notified each day his actions. To give a better appearance to the story of the possession, they distributed those who were supposed to be bewitched into three parties; and, at the earnest request of Grandier,

all apparent communication was broken off between the patients. Grandier wished, by an innocent stratagem, to cause this monstrous edifice of falsehood to fall of itself; he proposed to Laubardement that four priests should be habited in the way he was himself attired, and to ask of those possessed which of the five was the magician; but this was refused.

On the 26th of April they proceeded to search for the marks of the magician. Manouri, the brother-in-law of one of those who pretended they were possessed, entered the prison of Grandier, caused a bandage to be passed over his eyes, and pulled off all his garments. When he was desirous of persuading those who surrounded him, that the parts of the body marked by the devil were insensible, he turned the probe he held in his hand by one of the round ends, so that not being able to pass through the flesh, it was driven back into the hand of the surgeon; but, when the barbarous operator wished to shew, that the other parts of the body were not enchanted, he turned the instrument by the sharp end, and drove it in as far as the bone of the unfortunate victim, whose

cries and groans were heard at a considerable distance. The devil was waiting the arrival of his friend the Bishop of Poitiers to operate wonders. On Saturday the 17th he gave a passover, composed of the flesh of the heart of a child, taken at a sabbath held at Orleans in 1631 ; and of the ashes of a burnt host. This passover was presented to the supposed magician ; he denied its existence ; and he was allowed to exorcise. “ I consider,” said he to the bishop, “ that a magician cannot possess a Christian without his own consent.” The exorcists exclaimed, that Grandier was a heretic, and that he rejected a proposition received in the catholic church, and approved by the Sorbonne.

After this discussion, they brought sister Catherine, who refused to answer his Greek, under pretence that the host of the devil, which she had eaten, did not permit her to speak. Grandier put a question to her in the same language, but all those present uttered loud cries, calling him magician, and threatening to strangle him. “ If I am a magician,” said he, “ may the devil put a mark on my forehead here, in the presence of

these magistrates of the king." The exorcists, to the number of eight, imposed silence on the demons; a small furnace was brought, and the hosts burnt. This scene of juggling ended, the nuns took off their slippers, and threw them at the head of Grandier, who was chanting the service. The last day of June, one of those possessed, whom they were exorcising, declared, with the greatest effrontery, that Grandier had sent a thing which modesty forbids the writer to describe, to several girls to make them conceive monsters, and the true word for which she bellowed out with the greatest impudence. The stupid exorciser asked why the effect had not been produced; she replied, with a torrent of obscenities, such as are never heard but in the lowest houses of prostitution. The public indignation was at its height; and, to stifle its murmurs, Laubardement was obliged to publish an ordonnance forbidding any one, of any class or condition soever, to speak ill of these religious persons possessed with evil spirits in Loudon, under a penalty of ten thousand livres, or even a larger sum, as the nature of the case deserved. This was dated the 2d of

July, 1634. The subsequent course of the affair clearly justified Grandier; the sister Claire, agitated with remorse, declared that all she had asserted was false and a calumny, and that she had done it at the suggestion of Mignon and the others. Four days after, she continued steadfast in the same statement, and was desirous of making her escape. The sister Agnès withdrew herself from the communion, and said she was unworthy to receive her Saviour. Another also declared that an innocent man was accused; but the exorcists asserted, that all which had been uttered was at the suggestion of the devil, who spoke falsehoods when they were favourable, and truths when they were unfavourable, to Grandier. The commission charged with the trial assembled at the convent of the Carmelites the 26th of July, and on the 27th named for recorders two enemies to the curate of Loudon. The populace presented petitions against the injustice of Laubardement, requesting that the curate might be tried by the parliament of Paris, or some other court. This, however, all the commissioners represented as an assembly of the dregs of the people, not to be entitled to any credit, and their address was unavailing.

Grandier, seeing that appeals in his favour were useless, no longer hesitated in the certainty of his destruction. It was undoubted, that he must either be burnt as a sorcerer, or that all his enemies would be submitted to the most heavy punishments; he nevertheless prepared his defence. Being admitted before the judges, he thus addressed them:—"With the most profound humility I beseech you to consider with attention what the prophet says in the eighty-second Psalm, which contains a holy remonstrance for you to exercise your duties with rectitude, since being mortal men you will have to appear before the Almighty God, sovereign judge of the world, to render him an account of your administration. This spirit of the Lord now addresses you; the Lord is Lord in the assembly of the judges. Do justice to the poor, and help the aged and distressed, and deliver them from the hands of the wicked. You are children of the Lord; some time or other you will die like men, and you, who are now my hearers, will die like the rest." This remonstrance produced no effect; the commissioners wished to cover their assassination under the cloak of religion; they ordered processions

and public prayers, and called on Heaven to enlighten them.

The 18th of August, the commissary judges assembled at the convent of the Carmelites, and gave judgment. The treatise of Grandier *on the Celibacy of Priests* was ordered to be burnt with him. Grandier heard with great resolution the sentence of his condemnation, and thus addressed the judges :—“ Gentlemen, I call to witness God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the holy Virgin, who are my sole advocates, that I never have been a magician, and that I am totally unacquainted with sorcery; that I know no other magic than that of the holy scriptures, which I have always preached; and that I have no other belief, than that of our holy mother the catholic, apostolic, and Roman church. I renounce the devil, all his vanities, and all his works; I acknowledge my Saviour, and I pray to him, that the blood of his cross may be meritorious to me and to you my judges, I pray you to moderate my punishment, and not to cast my soul into despair.”—Having thus spoken, he shed tears in abundance. Laubardement, taking him aside, said, “ If you

wish to moderate the rigour of your punishment, declare your accomplices." "Being innocent," replied Grandier, "I have no accomplices." Houdoumain entreated him to depose against the magicians; but they could obtain from him nothing further. According to the terms of the sentence Grandier was put to the torture.

At Loudon, the custom was to lay two planks together, and to bind between them the legs of the criminal; they then drove in wedges with blows of a hammer, which broke the bones; and when the planks were untied, the splinters fell upon the ground. They allotted Grandier two wedges more than were generally given to the greatest criminals. Laubardement was present at the punishment. The monks exorcised the planks and the wedges. The wretched Grandier several times fainted away under the torture; they made him recover his senses by redoubling the blows: when his legs were beaten together, so that the marrow shewed itself, they took away the planks, and cast him upon a hand-barrow. The Curate did not allow a single imprecation to escape him, protested his innocence, and accused no one. He

said, that he never had known this Elizabeth Blanchard, very far from having any intercourse with her. They from thence proceeded into the Chamber of Council; he was put upon some straw near the fire, and demanded an Augustine priest to confess himself, which was refused. He was delivered against his own will into the hands of the exorcisers. They made the people retire, who pressed round the spectacle. The registrar of the commission remained near him for the space of three hours, and Laubarde-ment entreated him during this time to sign a memorial he held in his hand, which Grandier as constantly refused.

Towards five o'clock in the evening, the executioners carried him away upon a sieve. He declared to the lieutenant, who had the charge of criminals at Orleans, that he was dying innocent, and entreated him for his prayers to the just God in his behalf. In spite of his sufferings his look was tranquil, and his countenance collected. On leaving the place of trial, they read over again to him the articles of his accusation. When he arrived before the church of Saint Pierre du Marché,

Laubardement ordered him to descend from the cart. As he had lost the use of his limbs, he fell prostrate with his face against the ground. He waited with patience till they lifted him up again. The father Grillau approached at this instant, and mingled tears with his embrace. "I bring you the blessings of your mother, the church, and I pray God to have mercy upon you, and to receive you into his kingdom." Grandier returned him thanks for the pity his misfortunes had inspired, and entreated him to serve his mother as a son. The officer on guard solicited his pardon. "You have not offended me, said Grandier, you are obliged to fulfil the duties of your station."

They now approached the stake. The curate of Loudon gazed on it without alarm. The executioner placed him in an iron girdle, causing him to turn his back on the church of Sainte Croix. The articles of impeachment were again read, with his replies. Having finished, they asked him, if he persisted in all he had uttered. He replied that he did. The exorcisers, after having made signs of the cross over the funeral pile, were fearful, that he might profit by an indul-

gence which had sometimes been granted, and which, in their opinion, mitigated the severity of his tortures; it was, that he should be hanged, instead of burnt, and address the people before his execution. As he was going to harangue them, the exorcisers threw holy water on his face, and, observing that he was making a second attempt, they sent a monk to embrace their victim. The curate of Loudon aware of this hypocrisy, exclaimed, "Behold a kiss of Judas." Enraged by this observation, the clergy struck him on the head with a crucifix of iron. He was obliged to wait till they had finished a *Salve* and an *Ave Maria*, to make a final protestation of his innocence. The monks managed not to have him strangled. Grandier, seeing the executioner with a lighted torch in his hand, claimed the promise of the judge. The father Lactance took some flaming straw, and threw it on his face, exclaiming, "Wilt thou not acknowledge thy sin, wretch, and renounce the devil?" "I never knew him," replied Grandier, "and renounce him; I hope for the mercy of God."

Without waiting for the order of the civil officer,

the monks set fire to the pile. Grandier exclaimed, "Where is thy compassion, Father Lactance? There is a Judge in heaven, and I order you to appear in his presence within a month." Then, giving himself up to his Redeemer, he exclaimed, "*Deus meus, ad te vigilo, miserere mei, Deus,* (My God, I have faith in thee, pity me, O God.)"

Perhaps some Christians might have relaxed in their belief on an occasion so trying, or forsaken their faith with their sufferings. Holy water was then thrown in his face, for fear the populace should hear his last words. The cry was to strangle him, but the monks had tied the cord, and the unfortunate curate of Loudon was burnt alive. The place destined for the execution could not contain the number of the curious. A flock of doves alighted upon the dying embers; the staffs of the soldiery and the cries of the people could not drive them away. A large fly fluttered round the ashes of Grandier: the clergy exclaimed that it was Beelzebub, who had come to seize the soul of the magician. The father Lactance died a month after Grandier, and the capuchin Tranquille ex-

pired about the same time in convulsions of the satyriasis. The populace, instigated by their spiritual leaders, invoked them as saints; every street-porter was desirous of having a little bit of their clothes. The father in God, Tranquille, would have been buried naked, if a guard had not been placed to prevent the depredations of the pious who surrounded, and who, after having stripped off his garments, would have cut the body itself. The following epitaph was fixed on his tomb:—"Here lies the humble Father Tranquille, Capuchin Preacher. The Demons, not being able any longer to resist his courage in his employment of exorcist, have caused him to die by their persecutions, instigated to this by the magicians, the last day of May, 1633 *."

The above trial† contains the most circumstan-

* "Ci git l'humble Père Tranquille, Capucin Prédicateur, Les Démons ne pouvant plus supporter son courage en son emploi d'exorciste, l'ont fait mourir par leurs vexations, à ce portés par les magiciens, le dernier de Mai, 1633."—See *Hist. de la Magie* par J. Garinet, p. 234. à Paris, 1818

† See the *Histoire des Diables de Loudon, ou de la Possession des Religieuses Ursulines*, Amsterdam, 1716. The history of the trials and atrocities of religious communities may be curious

tial details of the injustice, which it was in the power of the clergy to inflict, at a time when superstition confronted sense, and aggravated malice, and which still partially prevailed even under the reign of Louis XIV. In latter years, the instructions that the lower classes received have enlightened their minds, and improved their views, and no sabbath-meetings are now supposed to be held, even in those places where the fear of the devil still exists.

LOUIS XIV. was born in 1638. He ascended the throne amidst the dangers and weakness of a minority, and began a reign which promoted the nation and the power of the monarch to a pitch of glory it never had before attained, even under these unfavourable auspices. His mother, Anne of Austria, by a sentence of the parliament, had the absolute regency, established by Louis XIII. The Prince de Condé was

and interesting, but is so far unsatisfactory, as to make the reader disgusted with the religion he ought to adore. One comfort for protestants is, that most of these abuses may be laid to the charge of ignorant and intolerant, Catholics.

director, consented to every proposition from the regent, and this was not the first time that the wishes of a king have been disregarded after his death. Present authority prevails easily over a power which exists no longer. The queen changed the council as she thought proper; she named Cardinal Mazarin the first minister, who consequently became, (although he was a foreigner,) master and conductor of the state. Richelieu had known him in Italy, during the war of 1630. Being aware of his ability for diplomatic negotiations, he had brought him to France, deeming him capable of assisting his own administration, and of managing the affairs of the nation. The Italian, prudent as he was, learned by experience the danger of his situation in the succession of his predecessor.

The following singular anecdote, as related at this time, may serve to shew to what extent fanaticism was sometimes carried. Marshal de Gassion, who would not marry because he thought life too burthensome to communicate its evils to any person, died a Calvinist, in 1647. A professor of rhetoric had made some stanzas in his praise, and

was going to pronounce them on a day advertised; but the university objected, thinking it improper that a Protestant hero should be praised by a Catholic professor. The poet addressed himself to the chancellor, who approved the decision of the university. At that time, a Marshal Saxe might have saved France, without appearing worthy of literary homage,—a strange anomaly in the favours a state bestowed on those who would die for its protection.

In 1661, Mazarin expired, like Richelieu, exhausted by labour, before the age of sixty. He was naturally as proud, haughty, and bold, as the other was pliant, cunning, and cautious. He had caused his seven nieces to have the best establishments in Paris, and procured the Duchy of Nevers for his nephew Mancini. His riches, which are said to have amounted to nearly two hundred millions, are a proof of the avarice of which he was accused. “Alas! I must give up all,” said he, sighing, when the physician informed him he was past recovery. The wants of the state rendered the opulence of the minister too odious not to be cavilled at by the judgment of the public.

Nevertheless, the rich abbeys accumulated on his head, besides the episcopacy of Metz, were its principal causes. Agitated with remorse at the end of his life, he made an offer of all his property to the king, who, however, would not accept it, (as the other had very probably foreseen,) and appeared as if he really regretted him sincerely, though impatient of exercising his own authority.

The time had arrived when affairs in France were to undergo another change. Two powerful ministers had for some time governed with supreme command, without, however, rendering their subjects happy. Divided between their own interests and those of the nation, in the advancement of its glory, they had left it poorer and less flourishing than it was under Henry IV.; but Louis soon convinced them of the power a king possesses, who joins with noble sentiments the penetration of an active spirit, and steady application to business. In the first council which was held, he declared that he should see every thing, henceforth, done himself, and prohibited any business to be transacted without his orders. "The face of the theatre changes," said he: "I will have other principles

from those of the late cardinal in the management of my state, and administration of my finances. You know what my wishes are: it is now your duty, gentlemen, to put them in execution."

Even a Pope was obliged to humble himself before the young monarch. The footmen of the Duke of Crequi, the French ambassador, had attacked a few soldiers of the Corsican guard. These disturbances very often occurred with the French, at that time, whose petulance and audacity often set all discipline at defiance. The furious Corsicans attacked the house of the ambassador, and killed several servants: they even fired upon his person, and attacked his carriage in the street. At this news the king demanded satisfaction from the head of the church. The court of Rome wished to gain time in order to settle matters, but the Monarch of the French seized Avignon, as an easy mode of finishing the dispute. Alexander VII. sent the Cardinal Chigi, his nephew, to beg the king's pardon. The Corsican guard was disbanded, and a pillar erected in memory of the event.

Such vigour in affairs of little importance made

the princes of Europe acquainted with what they were to expect from a young king who was so strict in his notions of honour. Nevertheless, Pope Innocent XI., virtuous, but haughty and inflexible, braved all the power of a monarch so formidable.

It was long since a dispute had arisen concerning the regale,—a right peculiar to the king of France (which runs back as far as the most remote times), by which they gather the income of the vacant episcopacies, and name others, during the vacancy, to the benefits depending. Several churches pretended they were exempt from that right. Louis XIV. declared by an edict, that the regale extended over all his kingdom. The bishops of Alet and Pamiers, celebrated for their opposition to the formulary concerning Jansenius, alone dared to resist the royal authority; and it is singular, that they were seconded by Innocent XI., although they had been rebellious to the pope's decree. The dispute became warm; the general assembly of the clergy took part with the court. The pope having condemned their proceedings, they seized

this occasion for examining the rights of the pope himself.

The assembly signalized itself by the four famous articles, in which the doctrine of the Gallican church was exposed. They declared, 1st, That the ecclesiastical power has no right over the temporalities of princes. 2nd, That the general council is superior to that of the pope, as was decided by the council of Constance. 3rd, That the customs and laws received in the Gallican church ought to be maintained. 4th, That the judgment of the sovereign pontiff, in matters of faith, is not infallible, except after the consent of the church.

These truths (which common good sense, joined to a moderate notion of antiquity, makes every man feel, though not previously aware of,) appeared, at that time, bold decisions. They were, at Rome, looked upon as errors, and the Italian prejudices which had inspired the league were not entirely suppressed over all the kingdom. This affair caused much discussion ; but since then Europe is changed. Innocent XI., more irritated than ever, condemned the propositions of the clergy,

and refused bulls to all the bishops named by the king.

This obstinacy might have caused his destruction. They were already settling to establish in France an independent patriarch; but the religion of the king prevented him from having recourse to that extremity. At the time of those violent quarrels with Innocent XI., Louis signalized himself in his zeal towards the Catholics by the destruction of Calvinism. After the taking of Rochelle, the Calvinists, not having the power of forming factions, enjoyed their privileges peaceably without troubling the government. Their seditious spirit had humbled itself under the supreme authority. The monarch did not fear them, and took advantage of their services: but the Catholics easily persuaded him that his glory and the interest of the crown required the extinction of all heresy; that he had the power over every thing, and that they would give way to his wishes. Being pleased with flattery, and having, besides, a desire of being useful to religion, notwithstanding his quarrel with the pope, he began by diminishing the liberties of the protestants, the more he excited their uneasiness and their murmurs, and soon

after had recourse to violence, which never in any case equalled persuasion.

A declaration of 1680, in which orders were contained to add to the number of the converted, all children seven years of age, was a motive sufficient for the parents to emigrate.

The mission of emissaries to the provinces, and of distribution of money to the converts, not proving successful, troops were despatched in order to inspire terror. The chancellor, Letellier, and Louvois, his son, were naturally inclined to despotism. The death of Colbert, who had protected the Calvinists as citizens, left those two ministers at leisure to follow their inclinations. Louvois thus expressed himself in letters written with his own hand: "His majesty is desirous that the heaviest penalties be put in force against those who are not willing to embrace his religion, and those who have the false glory to remain longest firm in their opinions, must be driven to the last extremities *;" imagining the

* "Sa Majesté veut qu'on fasse éprouver les dernières rigueurs à ceux qui ne voudront pas se faire de sa religion, et ceux qui auront la fausse gloire de vouloir demeurer les derniers doivent être poussés à la dernière extrémité."

opinion of the subject to depend on an order from the court.

The troops who had the charge of putting this mandate into execution, and above all the dragoons, executed it with the greatest rigour. Europe resounded with exaggerated accounts of their cruelties. Among the protestants, the present were compared to the persecutions of the ancient church. Severity produced the usual effect; it suddenly changed the zeal of the Calvinists into enthusiasm. They looked on their native country as a second Babylon; and the more precautions were taken to hinder their flight, the more they thought it their duty to escape. At last, Louis XIV. repealed the famous edict of Nantes, given by Henry IV., and approved by Louis XIII. The protestants were not allowed liberty of conscience. Their temples were demolished, and children torn from their parents, to be educated in the catholic religion.

Prohibitions against leaving the kingdom,—guards stationed on the coasts and frontiers,—love borne to a native country,—the ties of consanguinity,—the interests of fortune,—were vain;

in short, nothing could impede men driven away by despotism or despair. Thousands deserted, and were received by Holland, England, and Germany. They took with them immense sums of money ; and, what was still more precious, industry, and manufactures, the principal wealth of the kingdom. In a short time, France lost about five hundred thousand citizens : some writers have exceeded this statement ; and such a loss is not easy to recover even in a more populous country.

Louis XIV., when dying, enjoyed the same natural vigour as during his life. The sentiments of religion to which he was attached, supplied him with strength. "Why do you weep ?" said he ; "is it not time that I should decline ? you ought to have been long since prepared to lose me ; have you ever considered me as immortal* ?" Let not, however, the memory of Louis XIV. be calculated from the character which he left of himself in the lessons which were transmitted to the young king, his successor. Too violent an ardour for war,—too great

* " Pourquoi pleurez-vous ? " " N'est-il pas temps que je finisse ? vous avez du depuis longtems vous préparer à me perdre, m'avez-vous cru un immortel ? "

an inclination to despotism,—too much pride towards his neighbours,—too great a passion for ostentatious and superfluous expenses,—a certain vanity in his conduct, supported by the excessive praises of his flatterers, were his too evident imperfections; but, without these failings, what services might he not have rendered to mankind! since they did not hinder him from doing so many things equally useful and admirable; and from the poets and orators of his time he has almost enjoyed the honours of a deification.

In suppressing their praises, all of which strict philosophy might judge blameable, we still may perceive in Louis XIV., a great man and a great king. His private life was a model of decency. He was, like many heroes, seduced by the charms of pleasure, but he always honoured his wife; and, when he was informed of her death, in 1684, he exclaimed, “This is the first sorrow she has ever caused me* ;” perhaps the only instance on record of such an exclamation on such an occasion.

He qualified, with an amiable politeness, the majesty of his person, his attention to propriety, and

* “Voilà le premier chagrin qu’elle m’ait jamais donné.”

knew better than any other prince how to captivate the heart of a listener with the force of a word well applied. The Duchess of Burgundy, when young, was jesting one day at supper upon the ugliness of an officer who was present : “ I consider him,” said the king, “ one of the finest men in my kingdom, for he is one of the bravest.” The king certainly possessed more politeness, and the lady scarcely as much sense, as are at present to be found or expected from a monarch or a beauty.

The education of Louis had been much neglected ; and this is one of the greatest reproaches upon the memory of Mazarin. No one, however, felt more forcibly the importance of a careful education of his own children.

Men illustrious for their virtues, talents, and doctrines, such as Montansier, Beauvillier, Bossuet, Huet, and Fenelon, had the care of the most important task of instructing the dauphin. It may, perhaps, happen, that princes brought up with less pomp and effeminacy, accustomed to see men, instead of being praised by courtiers ; exercised to the labour imposed by sovereignty, which

is more than that incurred by any other condition in life, will perform from their infancy the hard apprenticeship of their duty. It was hardly possible to suppose that Henry IV. came out of the voluptuous court of Louis XIV.; nevertheless the Duke of Burgundy may deserve being cited as a model to all princes, so much do the lessons of wisdom triumph over the charms of vice.

Madame de Maintenon, a woman of wit and merit, diverted Louis XIV. from foreign gallantry, and succeeded so well in captivating his heart, that he married her privately in 1686. The devotion with which she had inspired him raised her to fortune; and her disinterestedness, both in regard to herself and her family, was more amiable, than consistent with a situation where every thing was at her entire disposal. The king gave her little, because she would not accept of more; she was so afflicted with low spirits, that it ought to make all indifferent to the idle fancies of ambition, and is a proof how little grandeur contributes to comfort. She wrote to one of her friends: "Do you not perceive that I am dying with melancholy in a situation of which it would be dif-

ficult to imagine the advantages*.” Perhaps this proceeded in a certain degree from too much devotion. She contributed much to the establishment of Saint Cyr, for the education of two hundred young ladies of noble families. This establishment, and that of the Invalids, where four thousand soldiers are rewarded for their services, and comforted for their wounds, do more honour to Louis XIV., than the magnificent palace of Versailles, on which he spent so many millions. Every thing was improved in France, and under his reign the finest manufactories were established. Commerce, which enriches all states, became one of the principal branches of policy. Agriculture, a yet more desirable branch, was not so much encouraged; and this is the reason why the administration of Sully, according to some writers, was preferable to that of Colbert; but the last, with excellent principles, often found himself incapable for their execution. If Louis XIV. left two milliards, six hundred millions, debts, (at twenty-eight pounds the marc), instead of

* “ Ne voyez-vous pas que je meurs de tristesse, dans une fortune qu'on aurait eu peine à imaginer ? ”

Henry IV., who left a considerable sum in the treasury; if he was obliged to have recourse to the stewards of his revenues, whom Henry IV. had luckily discharged; this was the inevitable consequence of a number of expenses at court, and also the misfortunes of war.

The capitation-tax, established in 1695, several heavy impositions, the alteration of the coin, the invention of a multitude of odd expedients to accumulate money, (such as selling a title of nobility for two thousand crowns, in 1696); all this caused an universal discontent in the kingdom. Greater economy would have spared the nation a number of misfortunes, and the king the loss of the affection of his subjects. The matters of political administration have excited too much curiosity not to mention some details on the subject. The rich manufactories of every sort, multiplied by Colbert, are looked upon as the greatest cause of its opulence; Sully, however, did not approve of them, and for this he was often blamed. One of the principles of the government of Louis was, that of resolving, after affairs were decided upon, to execute them

with courage. We may read in a writing of his own hand: "The faults which I have committed, and which have caused me an infinite degree of trouble, were done through complaisance, and through my giving way too easily to the advice of other people. Nothing is more dangerous than weakness, of any kind; when an error has been committed, the fault must be repaired as soon as possible; and no consideration ought to prevent the execution, not even a good intention." These are sentiments worthy of a great king. In the first instance, Louis was desirous of experiencing the advantages of friendship, but he made a bad choice. "I have sought for friends, and have only found intriguers. Whenever I give away a vacant place, I make one ungrateful and a hundred discontented*." Those who envy the fate of kings ought to reflect on these expressions of a monarch.

The laws underwent a considerable alteration; Seguier, Lamoignon, Talon, Bignon, and Pussort,

* "J'ai cherché des amis," said he, "et je n'ai trouvé que des intrigans. Toutes les fois que je donne une place vacante, je fais cent mé contents et un ingrat."

were employed for that purpose in the year 1667. The uniforms of his regiments, the use of the bayonet, the establishment of the grenadiers, the artillery-school, the body of the engineers, the regulation of the exercises of the troops, the institution of the order of Saint Louis, contributed greatly to the improvement of the military art—an art equally useful and dangerous, which is sometimes the safety of states, but always the destruction of mankind. The birth, the progress, and the decline of the navy, may be observed in the history of France. Experience has proved the essential use of its existence; and is what the Cardinal Fleuri could and ought to have done during a peaceful administration; his views, however, were not so far extended. Although possessing excellent sea-ports on both seas, and advantage for navigation, which no other maritime power can enjoy to the same degree, France found herself unable to defend her commerce and her colonies; this bad fortune has, however, served to make her acquainted with her best interests.

What contributed likewise to immortalize the

reign of Louis XIV. was the flourishing degree to which letters and sciences attained during his reign, and under his protection. The establishments, and the rewards for literature, did not cost a hundred thousand crowns: yet talents began to shew themselves, and master-pieces appeared of every description; the century of Augustus seemed to be revived. Corneille, Racine and Molière endeavoured to eclipse the glory of the Grecian theatre; La Fontaine surpassed former models in grace and elegance. Despréaux gave rules for imitation and good taste in poetry: a sublime eloquence appeared in Bossuet; Bourdaloue reunited the strength of good argument to the depth of evangelic truth. Fenelon, by the charms of his style, rendered rigid lessons of morality agreeable. The French language, rude and imperfect till that time, soon acquired perfection. A number of good writers used it, even on subjects the knowledge of which the learned seemed to have reserved to themselves: and as each produced works, the body of the nation was enlightened.

Three literary academies re-assembled in Paris,

such genius as was born to improve taste, and the sciences. The man of letters was respected, when he did not disgrace himself by a misapplication of his talents; the more so, because it conduced to the glory and happiness of society. Knowledge and politeness were disseminated in every province; pedantry was confined to the schools. Had it not been for the arrêt burlesque of Despréaux, the parliament, deceived by false reports, was about to renew the prohibition of teaching any philosophy contrary to that of the peripatetics. Such is the influence of old established prejudices; self-love, interest, and weakness, change them into principles; and the fear of novelty, carried to too great a degree, makes them prevail over useful truths, which time has not put to trial. But as soon as a road is opened to good studies, the progress of philosophy necessarily follows that of taste.

France, after having had good poets, produced excellent philosophers. Fontenelle was one of the most illustrious, and his example has raised competitors who have rivalled their master.

Whilst, however, men of letters were engaged

with the peaceful cultivation of their minds, the state was sometimes troubled by theological quarrels. That of the question occasioned by the mystical extravagances of a devotee, Madame Guyon, caused the disgrace of the celebrated bishop of Cambray. The piety of Fenelon was misled by a false system of spirituality; wishing to rectify her idle fancies, by the true love of God, he inadvertently added to the scandal. The bishop of Meaux, who had been his disciple, jealous perhaps of his reputation (for great men have their weaknesses), denounced him to the king as an innovator. The affair was referred to Rome. The *Maxims of the Saints** was condemned: it had been written by the bishop. Far from defending himself after the judgment, as he had done at the beginning of the dispute, he did not hesitate in subscribing to his own condemnation. Retiring to his diocese, and regretted at court, above all by his worthy scholar, he gave up his episcopal functions for literary pursuits.

If all the theologians had had the same docility

* *Maximes des Saints.*

as Fenelon, Jansenism would have been for a long while forgotten. Five propositions taken out of a Latin book of Jansenius, the bishop of Ypres, "*On Pardon*," and condemned by Innocent XI. in 1653, gave rise to dissensions in the French church, which caused much scandal. It was concerning a mystery, which reason can neither conceive nor explain. The spirit of party was more free in obscurity. The Jesuits, the zealous defenders of the secret of Rome, and of their science *moyenne*, found adversaries as formidable for their talents in writing good French, as for the extent of their learning. The famous Arnaud, a deep genius, violent and inflexible, cried down these casuists with his ordinary vehemence. The ridicule which Pascal affixed to them, in his *Provincial Letters**, made an impression which will never be forgotten. They adopted measures for pacifying the quarrel. The writers of Port Royal, and their partisans, rejected the five propositions, without agreeing that they were in Jansenius. This point of fact, though indifferent to religion, again excited animosities and discord. It was necessary to

* "*Lettres Provençales*."

sign a formulary from Rome, in which the fact was formally declared. Those who objected to it were considered as guilty. The nuns of Port Royal protested in vain, that, not understanding Latin, they could not testify, that Jansenius had inserted in his work the doctrines which they were required to condemn. Their obstinacy irritated Louis XIV. ; advised by the famous Père de la Chaise, he ordered their order to be abolished, themselves dispersed, and their house demolished. The P. Quesnel of the Oratoire had published his *Moral Reflections on the New Testament*. This book was also the cause of fresh troubles. The Cardinal of Noailles, archbishop of Paris, more remarkable for his rank than for his talents, had approved it, when bishop of Chalons, because he thought it calculated to inspire Christian virtues. This was enough to cause his being dismissed from court. Father Le Tellier, a treacherous and vindictive man, having become confessor to the King, in 1709, and being an impetuous theologian, who regarded nothing, and whose credit could crush every thing, who was in some respects the master of the clergy in France,

opposed Quesnel, and those he suspected to be favourable to Jansenism, and animated the Jesuits with an inveterate hatred. He partially inspired Louis XIV. with his own sentiments, who weakened by age, and not having sufficient penetration to foresee that, by exasperating the minds of those who were violent and obstinate, he should perpetuate a dispute which prudence might extinguish, the monarch demanded from Pope Clement the condemnation of Quesnel. An hundred and one of his propositions sent from France were censured, in 1713, by the famous bull *Unigenitus*. Some of them appeared to be correct and reasonable, and above all the following:—"The fear of an unjust excommunication ought not to impede the performance of a duty*"—became a pretence for a thousand claims. If the author had attached a bad sense to it, its apologists would not own it: they excused themselves by saying, how are we to know the meaning of another?

Louis gave orders for the acceptance of the bull. Forty bishops agreed to the proposition, explain-

* La crainte d'une excommunication injuste ne doit pas empêcher de faire son devoir.

ing the parts which they considered as requiring illustration; but the Cardinal of Noailles and a few others, together with the multitude, rose against the decision of the Pope, which they regarded as the work of the Jesuits. The letters of secret imprisonment, and the actions of the impetuous Le Tellier animated their spirits. The king died during the time of those ecclesiastical quarrels, which another century witnessed degenerating into a civil war, and agitating the kingdom, notwithstanding the moderation of a monarch, the friend to peace, and desirous of its preservation.

The Catholic church laments this discord, the incredulous triumph, the wise are surprised to see fellow-creatures tearing each other to pieces, instead of uniting through the spirit of charity; and philosophers have thought, that in disputing less on opinions, and in practising more the moral duties than they do, they would both become better citizens and better Christians. But the spirit of party is always blind; the object by which it is inflamed, conceals the importance of other considerations, and regards little the approbation of

moderate men, as long as it is applauded by the factious and turbulent, whose daily praises, however, are contradicted by the public voice.

It must be allowed, that under Louis XIV. the French nation was formed anew, and superior in many respects to the ancient. Manners, customs, tastes, and opinions changed, and this revolution was general throughout all the states. Those of high rank, softened down by luxury, attached to the prince through interest or affection, ceased to be reformers, and became courtiers, consecrating to the service of the crown that ambition which formerly rendered them so dangerous. The nobility joined to the merits of bravery that of good sense, of urbanity, of mildness; and what was lost by the subtilty of pleasures, was compensated by the culture of the social qualities. The clergy punished the prejudices which were contrary to the independence of the sovereign; and notwithstanding a remnant of former abuses, too difficult to be at once extinguished, the ecclesiastical ministry was rendered rather more respectable. Magistrates, such as d'Aguesseau, were worthy of reforming the laws: and lastly, honest men of every

description learnt to live and to reason freely; the people acquired industry and talents; and France became the centre of good taste, talents, society and pleasure. If follies were still to be found, it is a proof that society always preserves vices, even in advancing towards truth and virtue. The example of a virtuous and enlightened king is most capable of producing fortunate changes in a kingdom.

THE LIFE
OF
VOLTAIRE.

CHAPTER II.

THE progress which had been made in philosophy and letters, during the reign of Louis XIV., together with the discoveries of Newton, and other men of science in foreign countries, burst the strong fetters of ignorance and doubt, which had long enslaved the world. The old rules of the stage, had been revived by Corneille and Racine, and the ancient connexion of time, place, and action, which had gradually fallen into disuse among the moderns, were again illustrated and brought into practice by these celebrated tragic writers; by which the drama was advanced to a state of perfection which it had never till then attained.

The influence of superstition and ignorance, however, still prevailed: and it was to remove

those evils of vice and hypocrisy, to which the former gave rise, that the subject of these pages dedicated his life, his fortune, and his talents. The success of his efforts justified the boldness of the attempt, and shewed the world the superiority of intellect over the advantages of rank and fortune. Power may command services, and riches may obtain distinction; but the writings of the philosopher will influence the actions of those yet unborn, when the ostentation or profusion of the powerful and the wealthy are unappreciated or forgotten. They will only be recollected from the traditions of venal praise, or just censure; but the words of wisdom become sweeter from the lips of antiquity, and will be listened to in distant ages.

The 20th of February, 1694, gave birth to François Marie Arouet, afterwards so celebrated under the name of Voltaire. For some time he laboured under an indisposition so severe, that he was not expected to live, and was therefore baptized in private. The ceremony was, however, publicly repeated on the 22d of November, in the same year, at the church of Saint André-des-Arts, in Paris. It is rather singular that Voltaire, Fonte-

nelle, and our historian Gibbon, all of whom have obtained great celebrity, and arrived at an advanced age, should have come into the world feeble and sickly.

Voltaire's father was treasurer to the Chamber of Accounts. His mother's maiden name was Marguerite Daumant. They were both of good families of Poitou. Some men of letters, subsequently jealous of his talents, or his birth, have asserted that his father was of low extraction, and employed in tending flocks; and, that afterwards coming to Paris, he was engaged as a porter to a lawyer, from which office he subsequently rose to that of conveyancer. This appears to have been unfounded. Some of his ancestors had credit for wit and poetical talents, as far back as the end of the fifteenth century. And the two towns of Loudon and Saint Leu, paid their rustic honours to these favourites of the Muses.

Even as an infant, young Arouet attracted admiration by the boldness of his genius, and the originality of his remarks. The Abbé de Chateau Neuf, who was his godfather, had the charge of his education. This man had, early in life, either from

thoughtlessness or ambition, assumed the ecclesiastical robe; but disappointed by the restraint, and disgusted at the hypocrisy of his institution, he preferred the enjoyment of liberty to the chance of sacerdotal dignities, and resigned his fortune with his gown. No one who forsakes the church, looks back with complacency on its members; from enthusiasm to infidelity there is often but one step, and perhaps the asperity of the Abbé's remarks upon his own order, influenced the satirical vein of his godson. The Abbé was fond of his charge. Infancy is the period when kindness makes the greatest impression; and young Arouet loved him like a father. Instructions from those we love are most readily imbibed. Before he was three years old he could repeat most of the *Fables of La-Fontaine*, and all the *Moïsade*. In the literary infancy of a great philosopher, the biographer is seldom able to fix upon the subject which gives the first turn to his genius; but in the boldness of this poem, and the originality of its sentiments, may, perhaps, be traced the origin of the future incredulity and scepticism of Voltaire. Often confined to a sick bed, he was anxi-

ously watched over by the Abbé; and the empty origin of the religious dogmas, and solemnities of every country, were mutually discussed and disputed. The opinions which are received as rules of conduct when those we most love are no more, and the prejudices which are ingrafted in our childhood, and preserved in spite of the means of conviction of after-life, furnished them with arguments and conversation, which beguiled many a tedious hour. The sick boy balanced in the infant scale of his mental faculties, the scepticism of Epicurus and the philosophy of Lucretius, contrasted with the purer precepts of revealed religion. Like Pindar, he is said to have lisped verses from his cradle; and an early competition with an elder brother, whom he excelled, gave him a taste for, and practise in, their composition. In a letter to Madame du Châtelet, written long afterwards, he observes that, from early infancy, he was in the habit of repeating to himself the lines of Cicero, on the consolation and advantages of literary acquirement.

At the age of ten years he was sent to the college of Louis le Grand. It was conducted by the Jesuits, and was one of the best that Paris afforded. They encouraged emulation among

their students, and the distribution of prizes rewarded the successful efforts of competition. This was the time at which the celebrity of the order was at its greatest height, and the abuse of their power alone proved the instrument of its destruction. If they had confined their views to the instruction of the youth of the country to which they belonged, or the sending of their emissaries to China or Tonquin, their order might have existed even at this moment. And our regret is the greater, when we consider the talents of those who composed it, and the ample means they had of serving their country. The ambition and the misconduct of the members caused the destruction of the body*.

Here, while the rest of the scholars were amusing themselves with the childish sports that accorded with their age, young Arouet used to leave them to join the society of the Professors Tournamine and Porée. By the latter of these he was pronounced to be devoured by the desire of celebrity, and to be destined, sooner or later,

* The dissolution of the Jesuits in France was principally occasioned by a company of merchants of that order having undertaken pecuniary engagements which they were unable to fulfil.

to be the apostle of Deism in France. The prediction was verified by the success and tendency of his maturer compositions. Happy in being born to an independent fortune, he had not to contend with misery through the lower ranks of degraded merit, until he arrived at distinction; and the fire of his genius was never damped by subserviency to the opinions of a patron. Bold in his researches, and unfettered in his circumstances, he ranged the mazes of Literature; and that daring spirit which presumed to scan the Divinity, beamed with a steady light. The advantages which he derived from good society refined the train of his ideas, and the expression of his sentiments; and among the courtiers of Louis XIV. he acquired those graces of delicate humour and easy expression, by which his writings are so much distinguished. Most of those who were his friends at college remained so to his death; and almost all who imbibed his opinions of religion early in life, retained them in a more advanced age. Duvernet mentions, that he has a profession of faith of one of the oldest of his associates, which, before his death, was com-

mitted to his charge, and seems to have been purely deistical.

Two sorts of study, such as during the present attachment to ancient learning, have been little thought of as proper for the attention of students, occupied many of his hours, and much of his meditation. Of this class were the history of the great men then existing, and modern politics.

Perhaps these pursuits may be too much neglected at public colleges. The virtues and actions of the dead are seldom brought before the mind, except in the magnifying mirror of ancient history : but the abilities, or failings, of contemporaries form a lesson, valuable from its contrast with modern theories. Young Voltaire studied these things with attention, and shewed himself interested in the revolutions of persons in power. He loved to learn what was passing in the state, and to reason on the occurrences and political events of the day ; and the ordinary subject of his conversation was the consideration of the great interests of Europe. After finishing his studies, he, for the first time, saw the author of the *Moïsade*. It was the day of the distribution of

the prizes. Voltaire received several, and Rousseau expressed himself desirous of his acquaintance. He was brought forward blushing with pride, and elated by hope, and was presented to one whose writings he had so long admired. There is no period at which the contemplation of great abilities strike more forcibly, than when beheld in youth. Similarity of pursuit, with great disparity of age, is rarely attended by that extreme jealousy, which disturbs the brighter parts of reciprocal intellectual enjoyment. It is under such circumstances that the sight of a celebrated man produces the earnest desire of imitation, unmixed with envy. The contemplation of those, who are eminently great, is more striking, or more beautiful, when beheld at a distance; for, in works of nature, as in those of art, the brightest productions are best appreciated, when the whole is considered, without relation to its minuter parts; and posthumous celebrity, or antiquity, puts genius, as well as beauty, beyond the venom of criticism.

On leaving college, Voltaire found his godfather, the Abbé de Chateau Neuf, an inmate at home. The abbé had been the last lover of Ninon de

L'Enclos ; and had, at her request, composed a treatise on the Music of the Ancients. He introduced his godson to this beauty, who left him by will her principles of religious independence, and two thousand livres to buy books. She was at this time in her 90th year, living in the Rue des Tournelles, near the Bastille, at Paris. Those who composed her society were called les Oiseaux des Tournelles ; and the verses of Mr. Charleval, on his admission, are worthy of recollection.

Je ne suis plus oiseau des champs,
Mais de ces oiseaux des Tournelles,
Qui sans choix de saisons nouvelles
Se parlent d'amour en tous temps,
Et qui plaignent les tourterelles
De ne se baiser qu' au printemps.

Being an only child, her mother had, from her infancy intended to place her in a convent, but her father, a man of the world, and addicted to pleasure, interfered, and Ninon, who, at twelve years old, had read all Montaigne, could not be persuaded to spend much time over the Litany. The death of both her parents soon afterwards left her independent, and free in the pursuit of what her inclinations prompted ; and, at the age of fifteen, she preferred the gratification of her

passions, and the sacrifice of her character, to the restraints of a more pure connexion. Courted for her fortune, her wit, and her beauty, she rejected many suitors, and determined to exercise through life the liberty of loving, unbiassed and unrestrained, the objects of her own choice. One part of her domestic economy, however, deserves the greatest praise. She sacrificed the pleasure which a parent derives from the society of her offspring to their welfare in life, and contrived that her children should never be exposed to the contempt of the world, or made acquainted with the circumstance of their birth. She was aware that the only refuge the virtue of a daughter has from the indiscretion, or misconduct, of her mother, is what forgetfulness may deduce from time. She was also aware, that the conduct of a son in after-life is more guided by the tender care of a female parent, than the compulsive influence of a father; and that those can best estimate its benefits, whom misfortune has deprived of an opportunity of enjoying its advantages.

The commands of a father are like the sentences of a judge, which are respected and feared; but

the appeal to the advice, or approbation, of a mother is closely interwoven with her own happiness, her own pride, and her son's confidence. As Ninon advanced in life, she determined to pluck the roses of pleasure, without its thorns. She conceived it foolish to testify an exclusive attachment to any single object, and sensuality assumed the place of more fixed love, or platonic affection. Sensible of the charms of virtue, though indifferent to its support, she talked like Socrates, while she acted like Laïs; and the dignity of her demeanour in public, made her a favourite with the most modest of her sex. So much confidence was placed in her honour, that many of the nobility trusted her as their steward, and her abode was always frequented by the learned and the gay. She preserved her charms till within a few years of her death, and was at this time in high favour with the fashionable world, on account of having refused an invitation to court from her old friend Madame de Maintenon, on condition of her becoming a devotee*. The French nobility

* The reader will find some more very interesting details concerning Ninon de L'Enclos, in a French work, called *Europe Illustre*. 4to edit. Art. NINON.

were at that time characterized by ignorance, intolerance, and superstition. Absence from mass was considered criminal in a courtier; and the success of Marlborough and Eugene were attributed to a judgment from heaven on the heresies of the French general, who was in consequence disgraced; but the societies of Paris, in aversion to the austerities of Versailles, carried their love of pleasure even to licentiousness.

Voltaire's father wished him to make choice of a profession, but he replied he only wished for existence as a man of letters. At this time the literary world were divided between Rousseau and Saurin, the latter of whom had been imprisoned for a libel attributed to the former. The testimony of a witness, who avowed himself as having been suborned, caused the banishment of Rousseau. Voltaire seconded the zeal of his friends in a subscription, and contributed, as much as lay in his power, to the support of a person whom he considered as persecuted. About this time he was himself celebrated as a man of wit. His society was courted by all ranks, and one day, when at table with the Prince of Condé, he observed,

“ We are here all Princes, or Poets;” whence he was called, in jest, “ *Le familier des Princes.*” When old Arouet saw his son in societies so much beyond his rank and fortune, he was alarmed for his welfare and his prudence; and at the time he thought him pursuing his intended profession of the law, he found him writing a tragedy. A spirit of revenge had also sometime before suggested a small satire to him in verse, after the manner of Rousseau. He had been a candidate for a prize of the French academy. The theme proposed was that of the decoration altar of Notre Dame, by Louis XIV.; and the first serious attempt in verse of the author of the *Pucelle* was Devotion. His exertions, however, were unsuccessful, and the glory of the contest was assigned to the Abbé du Jarri. The defeat cannot be regarded as degrading, when the ages of the two candidates are considered. Young Arouet was in his sixteenth year, and the Abbé in his sixty-fifth; and the two opening lines of the prize ode stamped the seal of ridicule on the composition. Lamotte, who was the judge, was more influenced by the years than the merit of the two competitors.

The satire which Arouet wrote, was entitled "*Le Bourbier*," and brought him into sad disgrace ; he was turned out of his father's house, and the family dispute ended by the son being banished to the Marquis de Chateauneuf, the French Ambassador in Holland, whom he served in the capacity of a page. (Lepan mentions two anecdotes, or rather adventures, of the youthful poet at this period).

Once a lady of fashion, whose verses he used to correct, gave him a hundred Louis. As the young man, delighted at having so large a sum of money in his possession, was passing through the street of Saint Denis, a carriage, with horses, and appropriate liveries, was selling by auction ; he made a bidding, and they all fell to his lot, by which he was lightened of the burden of his money. He then hired servants, put them into livery, and in this style visited all his friends. Alas ! one day of happiness ends like another. After having dined in town, when he arrived at his father's house he could find no place for his equipage. He dismissed the coachman and servants, and consulted with the porter of the house. They

agreed to secure the carriage by a chain in the street; and the two horses were put into the master's stable, which was very small, and already had one inhabitant. The rack became a cause of dispute between the two intruders and the old resident. The father of the family was awakened by the noise at three o'clock in the morning, and being informed of the cause, went up into his son's room, and in a violent passion turned him out of the house. The difficulty was how to dispose of the coach and horses. The porter sent them to Fleurot, his son, a boy of fifteen, who drove them to a wheelwright's, where they were sold for half their original cost. On another occasion the young poet going home too late, found the door shut. His father, tired with his late hours, and perhaps ill-disposed towards him on account of his works, (probably "*Le Bourbier*,") had ordered the keys of the house to be deposited with himself, so that the porter could not admit his son. Arouet had recourse to the seats which were in the court-yard : as soon as he had lodged himself he fell fast asleep. Two counsellors who arrived at the house early in the morning, saw young Arouet

in this situation, and determined to play him a trick: they carried him to the coffee-house of the Croix de Malte, on the Quai Neuf. When he awoke, and found himself in the middle of the room, exposed to the jests of those who were at breakfast, his surprise and confusion may be easily conceived.

Whilst with the Marquis of Chateauneuf, he formed an attachment to the daughter of Madame du Noyer, a woman who did not bear the most respectable character. She conducted a scandalous and libellous journal, which gained her a subsistence, and only attracted notice for its impudence. She had had two daughters by a former marriage. The eldest was married to a Mr. de Constantin. The younger was still unmarried, and it was with her Voltaire formed his attachment. The mother for some time favoured the intimacy; but at last, disapproving of it, she complained to the ambassador, and the young poet, having transgressed his orders, in again visiting his mistress, was sent back to his parents. He attempted to carry on an intercourse with her through the means of male attire. The young lady

consented to his wishes, and, if he enjoyed his mistress, it was under the unnatural complexion of another sex.

The mother, having obtained possession of his letters, published her own folly and her daughter's dishonour. In one of these, of which there are fourteen, she mentions that the young poet had gained great credit for the composition of satirical verses, and that he was in repute as a wit. She also quotes the satire upon Lamotte, and expresses her fears for the consequences of his attack upon a member of the academy, and a general favourite.

We do not perceive in the letters to his mistress the strong feelings of passion which his subsequent compositions or his tragedies display; for few can paint this sort of affection well who are themselves strongly interested. Love must be subdued before we can anatomize its workings, as the light of day must be submitted to the crystal before we can detect the colours of the rainbow. Youth soon gets over disappointments of this nature; which, although more strongly felt at this period of life than at any other, are short-lived in proportion to their intensity. But, whilst he forgot

his attachment, he did not hesitate to use every art in his power to save an amiable young woman from the influence of an intriguing mother. The attempt at that time failed; but he had the satisfaction of being useful to her subsequently as the Baroness of Vinterfeld.

Voltaire's father, finding him resolute in his prosecution of poetical studies, forbade him the house, and bound him as clerk to an attorney of the name of Alain, in the *rue Percée* near the *Place Maubert*. Here he formed an intimacy with Thiriot, who continued his friend through life; and perhaps there is no circumstance which has done so much honour to his character as this connexion. A matrimonial alliance is generally formed for mutual convenience: the pure passion of love is debased by that of interest; but sincere friendship is a reciprocal interchange of benefits unmixed with any sordid consideration of advantage or requital.

M. Caumartin, a friend of the family, feeling compassion for his son in his present irksome situation, also cultivated his acquaintance. He had been intimate with the most celebrated men

under the reign of Louis XIV., and was extremely fond of relating anecdotes concerning Henry IV. and Sully.

Voltaire returned from his chateau of Saint Ange, and was occupied with the project of writing an epic poem, the hero of which should be Henry IV., before (to use his own words) he knew what an epic poem was. Thus, the house of Saint Ange may be called the cradle of the *Henriade*. The enthusiasm which Louis XIV. had excited in France during forty years, had so accustomed his subjects to think of none but himself, that they had almost forgotten Henry IV.; at least they only thought of him in the hour of distress. When a nation is in distress they regret the loss of a good king; for the recollection of a benefit is generally most lively when those on whom it is conferred have the least power of return; and a friend is seldom so warm as when he needs the assistance of another.

Rather before this time, Louis XIV. had expired, and a number of libels appeared, defamatory of the existing government: among the rest, the verses of "*Je les ai vu*," which were attributed

to young Arouet. From the presumptive and internal evidence against him, he was imprisoned, being then about two-and-twenty. The poem ended with the following line: "I have been witness to all these evils and I am not twenty*. It proved, however, to be the work of a bad writer of the name of Le Brun, and is almost a literal copy of what had been previously composed by the Abbé Regnier at the king's death.

This imprisonment lasted a year; he observes in a letter to Mr. de Genouville: *Hos Lebrun versiculos fecit, tulit alter honores*. His innocence was at last asserted, and at his liberation he was remunerated for the injustice and inconveniences he had experienced; he observed to the Regent "that he thanked him for having provided him with food, but hoped he would not hereafter trouble himself concerning his lodging." It was in the Bastille that he corrected the tragedy of *Œdipus*, which was, in part, composed and written when he was in his nineteenth year. On emerging from his imprisonment, he changed his name to Voltaire. In a collection of letters, en-

* J'ai vu tout ces maux et je n'ai pas vingt ans.

titled *Juvenilia*, there is one addressed to Mademoiselle Dunoyer, the same person he had known in Holland, which is signed "Voltaire," and has the following postscript :—"Be not surprised, my dear, at the change of my name,; I have been so unhappy with the other, that I wish to try a new one." The tragedy of *Œdipus* was performed for the first time towards the close of the year 1718; the dedication is to Madame the wife of the Regent; Du Fresne, a celebrated actor of the same age as the author, played the part of *Œdipus*, and Mademoiselle Desmesnes was *Jocasta*. It was at first unsuccessful, because the author had not introduced the passion of love in so frightful a story; but he at last gave way to the prejudices of the times, re-modelled it, and it was subsequently performed forty-five successive nights. It was printed in the same year of its representation, and La Motte predicted the future greatness of the rival of Racine and Corneille. The Abbé Chaulieu made a bad epigram on the occasion, calling in question La Motte's poetry and his judgment. The result, however, proved the contrary; and shews that the highest talents often

meet with the same repulses as insolent mediocrity. The greatest difficulty the author must have experienced in the composition of a tragedy, which had been before treated of by Sophocles and Corneille, and approved of in both, was the want of novelty. He has the credit, however, of having produced a master-piece ; and Rousseau, who had not as yet considered him in the light of an enemy, paid him the highest compliment. " This young Frenchman," said he, " at the age of twenty years, has borne the palm away from the Greek poet of eighty." Great part of the tragedy is borrowed from Sophocles, and is professed to be written on the same plan. He excuses the plagiarisms from the example of Racine, and quotes the saying of Molière, when he stole whole scenes from *Cyrano de Bergerac* ; that " the writing was good and worthy of himself, and therefore he had borrowed it."

As the life of Molière is one of the most interesting ; as, in relation to so great a dramatist, pronounced by Voltaire to be the best comic poet that ever existed in any nation, and that of one who, after the example of Corneille in tragedy,

had rescued comedy from chaos, we may be permitted to make a digression in its favour.

Jean Baptiste Poquelin was born in 1620; his family was ancient, and had served the king as upholsterers. His grandfather was one of the few who, by nature, loved the stage, and he often took the little Poquelin to the Hotel Bourgogne, where plays were performed, and whence the genius of his grandson for dramatic compositions took its origin. When he was a few years older, they sent him to the college of Aumont, in order that he might be educated for the bar. Here he contracted a friendship with Bernier, who was subsequently famous for his voyages; Chapelle the poet; and Cyrano de Bergerac, with whose work he made so free. From Gassendi, the Epicurean, he gained the habit of reasoning with accuracy and method. He had not quite finished his studies, when Louis XIII. died. The taste for the theatre which had been introduced by Cardinal Richelieu, was favoured by Anne of Austria; and, assuming the name of Molière, he placed himself at the head of one of the bands of actors, known under the denomination of

“*L'illustre Théâtre.*” During the disturbances which ensued in France, Molière was a tranquil, though not indifferent, spectator; and from the excesses which were then committed, he gleaned much of his future knowledge in portraying the ridiculous in the human character.

When, however, peace was established, he recommenced his performances, and attached himself to Madame Bejard, a good actress, with whom he lived, and who came from Languedoc. Her conduct, however, rendered him unhappy; he was always tormented with jealousy, owing to the levity of conduct of his mistress; and his own experience is said to have furnished him with colours to paint the broils of domestic life. A mutual taste for the theatre, and a mutual interest kept them together, and they went to Lyons, where the husband performed in his first piece of “*L'Étourdi.*” The inhabitants of the place had taste to appreciate, and candour enough to reward his talents; and a rival theatre was quickly abandoned. This play, although inferior to those which succeeded, still shews great

powers of natural and scenic dialogue, which he afterwards carried to such perfection.

After having performed some time at Lyons, he proceeded to Languedoc, where a general meeting of the state was held. The Prince de Conti, who had known Molière at college, was charged with the commission from the king; before him was performed *Dépit Amoureux*; and the effect it had was so great, that the prince offered the author the place of private secretary. Molière's engagements, however, prevented his acceptance; and, after travelling about for some time, he was finally brought to Paris, at the request of Louis XIV. He made his first appearance in the hall of the guards in the old Louvre, which had been decorated for the occasion. Success attended him here, although he was satirized by the comedians of the Hotel de Bourgogne, who had, till then, been in undisturbed possession of the public favour; the court took his part, and Molière soon convinced them they were right in their decision. It was here he produced his comedy, *Des Facheux*. About this time his mistress, Madame Bejard, brought home

a daughter she had had before her intimacy with Molière, by a gentleman of considerable property of Auvergne. This young girl eventually became his wife; the love with which she inspired him, appears to have been the strongest he ever felt; and, several years afterwards, having given him some strong grounds for complaint, and it being observed to him that she was capricious, he replied, "Yes, I admit it, but every thing becomes the fair, we suffer all things from the fair."

The *École des Femmes*, published at this time involved him in discussions with a host of critics; but, amidst the troubles of controversy, he neglected no occasion that occurred of shewing his goodness of heart to those in distress. On one of these occasions, he discovered the talents of Baron, whose abilities subsequently rendered him so much service.

Raisin, an organist of Troyes, practised a singular method of procuring a livelihood. He carried about a box which played different tunes at the command of the exhibitor's voice. Louis XIV. was desirous of seeing it, and Raisin was ordered to exhibit before the queen; she being

terrified at so unaccountable a phenomenon, the box was ordered to be opened, when, to the surprise of all present, out walked a child only five years old, and of a most prepossessing appearance. He was of course caressed by all the courtiers; and, Raisin, profiting by the opportunity, and pleading the chance of his being reduced to poverty from the discovery of his secret, was allowed to establish a theatre for boys; this was the first thing of the kind ever known in Paris. Young Baron acted in this company, and evinced great indications of future eminence. Molière, remarking his abilities, engaged him in his service, and felt for him the most tender regard.

In 1664, his *Tartufe* was presented during the time of a magnificent fête at Versailles; but the bigotry of the King was scandalized at the exposure of the hypocrisy of a Catholic, and the play was forbidden to be repeated. The favours from the court, however, and the publication of the *Misanthrope*, on which he founded his reputation, consoled him for the failure of the *Tartufe*, and for the disturbances which happened in his family. The difference of age be-

tween himself and his wife gave rise to the rumour of his marriage being incestuous; but a comparison of dates now sets this point at rest. He did not know Madame Bejard till 1652, and married her daughter in 1662. The *Malade Imaginaire* was the last of Molière's works; it was composed during the intervals of ease he experienced, whilst labouring under a pulmonary complaint. At the representation he burst a blood-vessel, while in the act of pronouncing the word "Juro." He was conveyed home, and expired on the 17th of February, in the year 1673, at the age of fifty-three years. His friends, to the number of one hundred, followed his body to the tomb. Some opposition was made to his interment; his wife exclaimed: "What! do they deny the rights of sepulture to one who, in Greece, would have merited altars*?" But, alas! ancient priests practised piety, the moderns teach it; a command from the King was found necessary to gain permission for his interment in holy ground. Madame Molière afterwards married Guerin, an indifferent actor.

* "Quoi l'on refuse la sépulture à celui qui dans la Grèce eut mérité des autels."

* It is now time that I should return to the subject of young Arouet. The candour of La-motte in allowing the merit of *Œdipus*, will ever be mentioned to his credit; for he was then at the head of the republic of letters, and he had reason to fear that he should soon see himself surpassed. Jealousy may condemn with faint praise, or a civil sneer, and few who dedicate their lives to literature, can bear the praises of a rival with indifference, or contempt. In this, as in every other, pursuit, in which men most delight, they are most anxious to excel all others, and can least bear the advances of a competitor. The author of *Œdipus* had been hitherto only known to the public as the author of some light compositions in verse, so that few were jealous of his abilities, or his fame; but the success of the tragedy gained him enemies, and the two famous lines

“ Nos prêtres ne sont pas ce qu’un vain peuple pense,
Notre crédulité fait toute leur science,”

were the watch-word for a war, which even his

* See *La Vie de Molière precedant ses Œuvres*, par PETITOT.

death could not extinguish, and which still rages against the recollection, or approval, of his principles.

If ever the deadliness of envy, or malice, entirely occupied the human breast, its excess has been found among the clergy; and when their private interests were concerned, they were as violent against each other, as against the impious individual who presumed to scan their mysteries; and priests, like women, are seldom satisfied but with the extermination of the object of their hatred. They feel the weakness of their cause, and dread a retort whilst they strike the blow. The reputation of the Jesuits gave them the united influence of temporal and spiritual power; as patrons of literature, their views were extended to the remotest quarters of the globe; and the common belief, both among the laity and their own body, was that Jesus Christ himself would conduct them into Paradise, let their enormities be ever so extravagant. The political influence of their institution was now, however, rather upon the decline; but there were still priests and fanaticism enough in France to alarm the boldest writer. The lives

of many of the followers of Christ were a scandal to their order, and afforded good subjects for the satirist, or the critic. The trial of Baptiste Girard, for the seduction and supposed enchantment of the novice Catherine Cadiere, as late as the year 1731, strikes the reader with horror and disgust at the profligacy and ignorance of the parties. The woman whom he had debauched, was persecuted with all the bitterness of malice and religious zeal. The duplicity of the Jesuit for some time protected him against facts, which did not admit of palliation, and a subsequent absolution from the church of Rome mitigated the final punishment due to his crimes. A smile of scorn, or pity, nevertheless must be forced from the religious, as well as from those of more free opinions, when they read, "That cautious as the Father Girard might be in his advances, he was one day surprised in the act of kissing his penitent across the grating of the convent*."

A host of inferior authors, fearing that the world of fashion should treat Voltaire with too much

* *Quelque précaution que prit Gerard, il fut surpris un jour me donnant un baiser à travers les grilles du couvent.*"

equality, wrote libels on his birth, and the change of his name; and, when we find censure attack parents, or a name, it must be on the rack of invention. Among civilized nations, it is considered unjust and cruel to satirize in the child the infirmities, follies, or misfortunes of the parent, and such malignity seldom molests a man of literature, but from a conviction, that it can never extinguish his personal fame. It proceeds generally from a hireling author, or from some little, low, contemptible, and foolish man, of a bad disposition, with imaginary talents, who has neither sufficient courage nor good-nature to suppress the paltry venom of his own conceptions*. A

* The only proper use of satire is to expose vices and reform abuses; it may be given by the Muse, but must be guided by the Gods; and the great master of poetry has some excellent sentiments, which all must approve, contained in the following verses :

Curst be the verse, how well so e'er it flow,
Which tends to make one worthy man my foe.
Give virtue scandal, innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear.
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fallen worth, or beauty in distress;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour injur'd to defend;

Who

libel is the natural offspring of a weak head and corrupt heart, and is sometimes to be found still emanating even from a christian teacher, or protestant clergyman of the present century.

High birth, unattended by riches, or by talents, much as it may adorn a drawing-room, or add to the splendour of a court, and conduce to the good reception of the possessor among persons of the same rank, attracts little notice and little envy from others; but money, or wit, pays heavier tribute to censure, than the social qualities of the owner, whoever he may be, can redeem. He who occupies a situation independent of the world, is regarded with distrust both by his superiors and inferiors; they hate, because they envy him; and the lips that flatter his foibles, proclaim to the world the follies of his unguarded confidence. Eminence of every description has this cup of

Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray.
Who reads but with a lust to misapply,
Makes Satire a lampoon, and Fiction lie.

A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.

POPE'S *Prologue to the Imitations of Horace.*

bitterness; history relates that the head of Jesus was crowned with thorns. Yet, while we bow to the rod of fate, we must hesitate to what divinity to ascribe the attributes of our existence. The fire of youth, like the freedom of an impetuous horse, may spring indignant from the spur of injustice; even that is less felt the longer we live, and the more it is used; and, at last, we fall into a quiet and indifferent scepticism as to what others say, or feel, or think. The clergy may boast that insensibility is the precious fruit of piety and devotion,—the unprotected can tell envy, malice, and persecution, to be evils incident to humanity.

CHAPTER III.

DURING the applauses and criticisms to which *Œdipus* gave rise, a still more violent disturbance was occasioned in Paris by the appearance of an outrageous libel on the Regent, entitled, "*Les Philippiques*," and which was attributed to the same pen. The trifling reputation of La Grange Chancel, the real author, hindered all suspicion from falling in the right quarter; and the youthful composer of *Œdipus* was obliged to bear the undivided weight of a storm, which at first threatened to prove his destruction. Its violence, however, by degrees, subsided. An attack upon one high in office is seldom attended with so much danger as that on a private individual; and the Regent mitigated the punishment of perpetual imprisonment, to the milder penalty of banishment from Paris, with a choice of free residence elsewhere. Many persons offered an

asylum to one who had already acquired so much celebrity from the persecutions he had undergone, and the Château of Sully was fixed upon for his residence, having the combined advantages of an extensive library, and of being the resort of the highest ranks in society; he was also at that time engaged in the *Henriade*, of which Maximilian de Bethune was one of the principal characters, to whose family the house belonged. This work he was pressed to finish; but the success of *Ædipus*, and his love for *Melpomene*, had intoxicated him, and he wished to re-appear at Paris with a new tragedy. In the midst of dissipation, occasional study, and the enjoyments of love, he produced *Artemira*, which was first represented in the year 1720. This tragedy is in plot the same as *Mariamne*, and formed evidently on the model of Racine. A mistress of Voltaire's played the part of Artemira. It had little success at the time; but procured the recall of the author to Paris, from whence he had been banished. On his return, he, no doubt, experienced the pleasure which an exile feels in again visiting his native country which he loves; but this enjoyment was only of short continuance. The death of M. de Genonville, one of

his most intimate friends, plunged him into the deepest distress. He was a member of the Parliament of Paris, possessed of talents which promised much, and a character for friendship which is rarely equalled. An acquaintance with a man of this description is valuable, his friendship inestimable; and a person who has in exile and disgrace experienced the advice and assistance of such a man, will lament, with more than common grief, a loss he never can expect to replace. The intimacy of Voltaire with the enemies of the Regent, the Duke de Richelieu, and the Baron of Goertz, caused him to be regarded with a suspicious eye. Indeed, it was through this connexion that the libel of *Les Philippiques* was laid to his charge.

Louis Duplessis, Duke of Richelieu, was born at Paris in 1696. His brilliant qualities and his vices shewed themselves in his infancy; and, before the age of one-and-twenty, he had been twice in the Bastille, on account of his gallantry, and a conspiracy against the government. His successes with women, a duel attended with publicity, and good fortune in war, conspired to render him an object of emulation with his contem-

poraries ; but he does not appear to have possessed much generosity of character, and the gratification of vanity was the reward he looked to for his labours ; a reward which generally perverts every action and every sentiment. When he first appeared at court, he bore the name of the Duke of Fronsac, and it is thus that Madame de Maintenon speaks of him, in a letter to his father, at his entrance into life : “ I am delighted, my dear duke, to have to tell you, that the Duke of Fronsac succeeds very well at Marly. Never has a young man entered the world with more advantage ; he pleases the king and the whole court ; every thing that he does, he does well ; he dances gracefully, and plays decently, he is an admirable horseman, he is polite, he is neither bashful nor presuming, but he is respectful ; he jests, and his conversation is excellent ; in short, he is wanting in no good quality. The Duchess of Burgundy pays great attention to your son*.”

“ * Je suis ravie, mon cher duc, d'avoir à vous dire que M. le Duc de Fronsac réussit très-bien à Marly. Jamais jeune homme n'est entré plus agréablement dans le monde ; il plait au roi et à toute la cour ; il fait bien tout ce qu'il fait ; il danse très-bien, il joue honnêtement ; il est à cheval à merveille ; il est poli,

He was at this time two-and-twenty years of age, younger than Voltaire, but a friend of his, and one for whom he afterwards shewed as much regard as the selfish nature of his disposition would admit.

The Baron de Goertz was prime-minister of Charles XII.; the wars in which that king was engaged so drained the finances of his country, that the minister was obliged to augment the copper currency of the kingdom, and to bear the whole weight of the resentment of a people, who did not dare openly to express the hatred they bore their monarch. A tax, which he was desirous of levying on the church, contributed to render him still more odious. The clergy, who too often identified their own cause with that of religion, publicly accused him of Atheism, because he wanted to lay them under contributions. The new pieces had the stamp of some heathen divinities; they took occasion to call them the gods of the Baron de Goertz. He was a man of talent and character,

il n'est point timide, ni hardi ; mais il est respectueux, il raille, il est de très-bonne conversation ; enfin rien ne lui manque ; Madame la Duchesse de Bourgogne a une grande attention pour Monsieur votre fils."

which bore some resemblance to that of Cardinal Alberoni, with whom he had formerly planned the overthrow of all Europe. Part of the scheme, it has been said, was intrusted to his associate.

Once, when Voltaire was holding up the train of the high-priest during the representation of *Œdipus*, the Marchioness of Villars inquired who he was, and on being informed he was the author, she was introduced to him. Having obtained permission to visit at her house, he conceived a passion for her, and this appears to have been one of the most durable he ever felt; indeed he never spoke of it but with sentiments of the greatest remorse, and for some time it prevented his application to literary studies; the prosecution of which had become necessary to his happiness*. On his return from his house at

* This anecdote I have taken as related by Condorcet, though some, who acquiesce in the sentiments of the *Wife of Bath*, will hesitate in their belief when they read

“ Love rarely haunts the breast where learning lies,
And Venus sets ere Mercury can rise;
Those play the scholars who can't play the men,
And use that weapon which is left—their pen.”

On this subject, as well as some others of equal delicacy, the ladies must be allowed the sovereign right of decision.

Vauvillars, he lodged at the house of the President de Berniere, who had been intimate with Mr. de Genonville, his deceased friend. It was at this time, that Madame de Rupelmonde, the daughter of the Marshal d'Albyre, had proposed to him the excursion into Holland.

At Brussels he met Jean Baptiste Rousseau, with whom he was desirous of conversing, and whose works he admired. The two authors consulted each other regarding their respective compositions. Voltaire's *Epistle to Urania* was written at this time, and submitted to the criticism of Rousseau, who pretended to be disgusted with its impiety. The authors met friends, but parted irreconcilable enemies; Rousseau poured forth a torrent of abuse against Voltaire, which lasted for fifteen years; but his patience was at last tired; forbearance is apt to be fatigued by exercise; and when we read of the severity with which he treated one who had become an object of pity, even with his rivals, we cannot help observing, with regret, that, among human creatures, incapability of retort, often aggravates the malice of the oppressor.

Rousseau's disavowal on his death-bed of the infamous couplets attributed to him, and which were the cause of his banishment, finally persuaded those of his innocence whose hearts had been long touched by his misfortunes. His talents, for some time, struggled against his disgrace; but the long continuance of his exile distorted his imagination, and, although he was one of those who had encouraged the rising talents of Voltaire, he could not support the blaze of his elevated glory. Another aggravation of the quarrel, is also said to have arisen, from Voltaire telling his friend, that his *Ode to Posterity* would never reach its destination. The *Epistle to Urania* was not published till 1736. The persecutions of the time rendered subterfuge necessary; the author was obliged to disavow his work, and attribute it to the Abbé Chaulieu.

This species of concealment may be allowed in literary compositions, and could not have the tendency of hurting the Abbé's character as a Christian and a scholar; and I cannot help agreeing with Condorcet in this opinion, though I should not be disposed to acquiesce in the other so strongly reprobated by Mr. Lèpan that those

vices which caused the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are only reckoned criminal from the influence of superstition*.

The clergy were, and always have been, more eager for the temporal punishment of a heretic than his eternal damnation. Those who discussed the opinions which they maintained, and were alone supposed able to defend them, were persecuted with all the bitterness of insatiable malice and perverted zeal; and thus the pure stream of unity and brotherly love which springs from the Gospel, like the waters from a high mountain, whose head is concealed by clouds, becomes disturbed and contaminated in its course through the human heart. It is rather singular, that, among those men, the practice of moderation should fall so far short of the precept, and that they should be so desirous of mingling together divine and human things,—a practice from which every good Christian ought to abstain.

On Voltaire's return from Holland, the abode which he fixed on was at Maisons, situated upon the banks of the Seine and the forest of St. Germain. It had been built by Mansard, subsequently a

* *Preface to the Life of Voltaire*, p. 10, 8vo., 1817. Paris.

famous architect, who, when only a simple mason, had shewn indications of genius. It belonged to the President Desmaisons.

Before he had long resided there, he was attacked by the small-pox. Mademoiselle Couvreur, a celebrated actress, was going to read the tragedy of *Marianne* when the first symptoms of the disease appeared. She attended her sick patient with the fondest assiduity and attention, until an express which was sent for his friend Thiriot had returned. The complaint was rather obstinate, but at last gave way to the combined powers of emetics and lemonade; and in about a month, Voltaire returned, in a feeble state, to Paris.

He had hardly entered the carriage and set out on his journey, when a violent fire broke out, and burnt down a wing of the house he had quitted, and the apartments he had so lately occupied.

On his recovery, he published *The Padlock**, which had been written when he was in his two-and-twentieth year. It was composed on the occasion of the love he bore to a married lady,

* *Le Cadenas*.

whose husband had taken the strange precaution of securing her honour and his own credit by this invention,—a custom much approved of in Spain, where the heat of the climate is reported to have such an influence on the constitution as to cause a fainting fit in an Iberian beauty, even from the glance of a stranger passing before her window.

On his return to Paris, Voltaire wished to heal the wounds of self-love which the failure of *Artemira* had inflicted; and, in 1724, *Mariamne* was acted for the first time.

Like *Ædipus*, it was obliged to undergo some alterations before it suited the public taste, and was then played for forty nights successively. The story and plot are much the same as what we collect from history.—*Mariamne*, the wife of Herod, is beheaded by his orders. This is the same Herod whom Josephus mentions as ordering some of the most illustrious of his subjects to be executed at the moment of his decease, in order that all Judea might be in tears on the day of his death,—a new and rather an artificial mode of exciting sorrow. The same sanguinary character is preserved on the stage; and the tragedy is

much on the same plan with *Artemira*; but the plot is more simple and the poetry more beautiful.

Rousseau, jealous of its success, wrote from Brussels that it was literary plagiarism; and, in a spirit of opposition, dressed up the *Mariamne* of Tristan a-fresh; but it could not be acted by the players nor sold by the booksellers.

About this time, the public was in expectation of the *Henriade*. Before it was put to press, the author submitted it to the examination of some of his literary friends, among whom was the President Hainault. Each judge found some fault; and Voltaire, seeing the impossibility of altering the passages without destroying its most material beauties, and enraged at their observations, in a moment of anger threw it into the fire, from which it was rescued by the president. Rather before the publication of *Mariamne*, however, its first edition appeared under the title of *The Poem of the League*. It was printed in London; but the author had not sufficient time at his disposal to dedicate to the completion of the work, and it was therefore full of omissions and errors. The Abbé Desfontaines soon after published some

copies, in which he supplied the deficiencies with his own poetry, which, however, had only the effect of making himself ridiculous, and enraging the author. Thiriot, who interfered, made up the quarrel, and a short peace took place. When, a few days after, however, the Abbé was seized and confined in the Bicêtre, for a crime which then endangered his life, Voltaire, through the interest of the Marquis de Prie, procured his release; and the late prisoner, in the grateful feelings of safety, wrote him a letter beginning with the words, "I owe you my liberty and life;" which was, however, succeeded by a libel on his late benefactor. Thiriot saw it and threw it into the fire. The Abbé immediately joined Rousseau in tormenting the person to whom he owed such obligations; for gratitude is a weaker passion than envy.

The small comedy of *l'Indiscret*, notwithstanding its success, added but little to the author's glory; and one of those adventures, which rarely occur in polished society, forced him into a profound retreat. Voltaire made it his study, and considered it as desirable, to be intimate with those high in rank, and of fortune superior to his

own; and it is rarely that the company of the rich and the powerful does not exact its share of danger, or dependance; the truth of which assertion is shown by the effects which he experienced from it. Either by the publication of some verses, or a witty repartee, he had given offence to the Chevalier de Rohan, who caused him to be publicly caned, by his servants, at the door of the Duke de Sully's house, where he was engaged to dinner.

The Chevalier de Rohan, here mentioned, had neither in his character, or sentiments, any of those qualities which formerly had distinguished his illustrious house. His character was stained with the imputation of cowardice and usurious practices; and some libellous verses were made on his marriage*. A couplet, or a wager, cannot be considered as proofs of a fact, or a probability; but they, nevertheless, shew the opinions of the

* Sans offenser votre sagesse,
Vous le pouvez belle Comtesse
Faire cocu ce vieux fripon;
Votre propre honneur l'ordonne,
Il ne vous ferait qu'un poltron
Couchez avec un honnête homme.

times. A woman's dignity, too, is often selfish; and some marry a rich husband, whom they despise, to intrigue with a less-endowed lover*.

The author of the *Henriade* wished to wipe away this stain on his honour with the blood of his enemy, and solicited the Duke de Sully's protection and advice. The verses beginning with "*Sans avoir l'art de feindre,*" and addressed to the Marquise de Prie, the duke's mistress, made her turn a deaf ear to his solicitations. He retired into the country, and after having taken some lessons from a fencing-master, demanded satisfaction from the chevalier. De Rohan took no further notice of the matter, or his challenge, than by procuring his confinement in the Bastille for six months. Perhaps the secret and hidden malice of the human heart, which exists in every breast, hindered the Duke de Sully from interesting himself in the cause of a friend, because he was a rival.

* The lines of Pope, on *Sir Balaam's Daughter*, are not inapplicable—

" His daughter flaunts a viscount's tawdry wife;
She bears a coronet and pox for life."

At the expiration of the term of his imprisonment, Voltaire found that his friends had deserted him, and that his honour had suffered ; and, being unable to rouse the justice of the government of France, he forsook his native country and revenge, for England and republicanism. Here, like Alcibiades among the Spartans, he admired every thing, and studied every thing ; he traced and investigated the proximate and the remote causes of the liberty of the nation, and compared it with the different constitution and pompous slavery of France. He applied to philosophy and the arts, and respected the opinions, while he admired the freedom of religious disquisitions which the English enjoy. Pope, generally allowed to be the greatest poet and genius that has appeared in this country, from the time in which he lived to the present day, was one with whom Voltaire made his first acquaintance. At the outset, however, their interviews were very much embarrassed. Pope expressed himself with the greatest difficulty in French ; and the other, who was but little acquainted with the peculiarities of the English language, could not

make himself understood; he accordingly retired to a neighbouring village, and did not return to London until he had acquired the requisite facility of expression*. He then entered into the society of the learned and the gay; attained the power of composition in the language of the people among whom he lived, and neglected nothing that might hereafter be useful to his own country. In the year 1726, he published a genuine edition of the *Henriade*, in quarto, in London, with a flattering dedication to the queen. It was published by subscription.

Thiriot, who had the charge of the English contributions in Paris, had already received twenty-four; when, on a day of the Feast of Pentecost, and while he was at prayers in a church, some thieves stole the money. The subscribers,

* Dr. Johnson's account of their intimacy is, however, different; he says that, "he had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with so much grossness, that Mr. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered by a trial, that he was a spy from the court, and never considered him as a man worthy of any confidence."—*Life of Pope*.

This faint deception and ill-conduct is not noticed by any other biographer; and the high character of Dr. Johnson for veracity alone induces me to give it its present place.

however, lost nothing in consequence of this misfortune. The conditions of the work were fulfilled, and Voltaire wrote to his friend, that this accident would perhaps incline him not to attend mass, but that it would never prevent his loving him, and feeling gratitude for his friendship. The poem describes the civil wars of France, during part of the sixteenth century; the massacre of Saint Bartholomew; the death of Charles IX. and Henry III., and the leaders of the different factions of the League; and concludes with the triumphant entry of Henry IV. into Paris.

The first edition of this work, so favourable to toleration, appeared just as the Duke de Bourbon had renewed the fatal edict of Louis XIV. against the Protestants. It was the first true epic poem that had ever been written in France. The style and moral are admirable; and the incidents and plots natural; none of the sentiments, or characters, are overdrawn, or too highly coloured; and when the supernatural agency of spirit is introduced, it is always done with the greatest appearance of simplicity. Though the poet may

have copied the great masters of antiquity, yet the imitation, according to the opinion of the King^{*} of Prussia, maintains the spirit of originality; and the seventh canto of the *Henriade* may hold an equal place with the descent of Ulysses to the infernal regions. A spirit of tolerance for religious opinions is every where inculcated, and the work is worthy of being dedicated to the queen of the English nation. The description of England, during the reign of Elizabeth, cannot fail of being interesting to the British reader, or the admirers of fine poetry, although his countrymen occasionally object to the monotony of the verses.

Though this poem was not condemned, yet the author could not obtain permission to have it printed in France; and when some private copies were circulated in Paris, the clergy wished to seize them, and were desirous of passing an ecclesiastical censure upon the work itself, as containing the errors of the Semi-Pelagians. At court, it was said, that no one could publish a work, complimentary to the Admiral de Coligny, without being an utterer of sedition; but, in spite of all this opposition, the

Henriade had the greatest success, and has been translated into many of the modern languages. It has also attracted more notice, and been more criticised than any of the other works of the author; for his enemies were always on the alert; and private animosities, in this case as in most others, guided the judgment pronounced. The opinion of an anonymous writer on the compositions of another, affords an ample and secure opportunity of exercising private malice; and a traitorous hand may stab unseen, and undetected, to the heart of a benefactor.

Voltaire, determined to propagate the principles he had acquired in England, and to weaken the fanaticism of the catholics, by the dissemination of the philosophy of Bolingbroke among his own countrymen. His ideas do not, however, seem to have suggested, or approved of, a political revolution; and, though smarting under his late grievances, and admiring a free government, he only combated those prejudices which seemed to him to be the most frequent causes of the effusion of human blood. Perceiving the slight effect, which religious discussions had,

either on the morals, or the conduct of the English people, he thought that the same freedom might be introduced into France without any more serious detriment. He did not, however, reflect, that a nation of Catholics, in whom bigotry is blended with a sense of duty, can never be converted; and that, if the authority of Saint Peter, that link of their persuasion, which unites heaven and earth, is once questioned, or cancelled, their religion falls to the ground. The French revolution shews what papists are without religion, and without a leader.

Liberal subscriptions among the English enabled Voltaire to live in a manner worthy of his character. About the same time, Montesquieu visited this country, in order to observe its manners and its laws, and this coincidence opened a new communication between the two rival nations. In the preceding century, Charles II. had, by his example, induced us, in some measure, to adopt the arts and manners of France; and the literature of Louis XIV. was a model for that of England. France, indeed, had only borrowed some discoveries in

mathematics from their neighbours, and Voltaire and Montesquieu were the first who recommended to their countrymen the study and imitation of their rivals. Locke and Newton were now no more; but their spirit was infused into their successors, and the philosophy of Shaftesbury, embellished by the versification of Pope, and commented on by Bolingbroke, had given rise to a spirit of Deism. This, however, was counterbalanced by the mild and pacific morality, equally exempt from intolerance and superstition which was found in the pages of the *Spectator* and the *Guardian*; and Swift, who could so well combine the powers of sarcasm with logic, had only directed the venom of his arrows against the catholics. The attacks of Wollaston, Collins, and Tyndal, against revelation, were slowly propagated, for the English, attached to their commercial, or political interests, were neither changed nor frightened by the disputes of the philosophers; every thing followed its usual course; the clergy had not occasion to apply to the magistracy for support in the exercise of their authority; and the Deists caused less disturbance

in this country than the peaceful but eccentric Quakers.

After a residence of three years in England, the voice of friendship, or perhaps of the minister, recalled Voltaire to Paris. He yielded to its entreaties, and more especially to that natural and spontaneous instinct which always recalls us with pleasure to the place of our birth, and which has its charms in spite of whatever injustice, or inconveniences, we may have there experienced. The theorist may speculate in his closet, or the politician may devise schemes for the more perfect government of the kingdom from which he is an exile; but the heart of the father and the friend will overflow at the mention of the welfare of that land, in which he spent the earlier part of a life, which may have been subsequently varied by good, or evil: where he first estimated the blessings of those to whom he looked up with gratitude and with awe, before he could comprehend the attributes of a superior Being, and to those early recollections which promised bright days of future happiness with those who have been subsequently separated by distance, or by death.

Before Voltaire quitted England, he published two essays, one upon our civil wars, and another on epic poetry; these two works were in English; and if he owed homage to a nation, by whom he had been received in the most favourable manner, and where he had enjoyed the liberty of writing and speaking with entire freedom, it must be allowed, that he has expressed it in a manner which a native would not consider the most complimentary. On his return to Paris he found it distracted by leaders of factions, intrigues, and every kind of unjustifiable proceedings. The clergy, as is generally the case on such occasions, contributed as much as they were able, to foment these disturbances. He accordingly retired to the faubourg Saint Marceau, where he lived in the most complete seclusion, and was occupied on the *Life of Charles XII.*, a work which has been considered by some as a master-piece of history, and by others, with the testimony of Madame de Genlis at their head, as a mere romance. When it first appeared it passed through twenty editions in the space of a year. Voltaire was now in the

enjoyment of free and unembarrassed circumstances. Few things add so much to the enjoyment of literary fame, or the prosecution of literary acquirements, as independence. He owed his, principally to the London edition of the *Henriade*; to fortunate speculations in the public funds; and, to the death of his father. The last, though not the most amiable, yet the most secret and sincere, wish of an expectant son.

Although "Plutus had conspired with Mercury," to enrich him, yet his easy circumstances, never diverted him from the advancement of his fame, or his compositions. The tragedy of *Brutus* was the first-fruit and offspring of his journey into England, and the attention he had paid to the English Constitution. It was represented in 1736.

It is a strange circumstance, that a tragedy which has been generally read, much admired, and translated into many different languages, should have been only performed six times, and not much applauded by the audience. The minds of the French were indifferent to bold expressions of freedom; to touch their hearts, it was neces-

sary to flatter the national vanity ; the sentiments of republicanism, and those occurrences on the stage which note its blessings and its existence, and which, among an English audience, excite the passions of pity, or of horror, fell unheeded and unnoticed by Parisian hearers ; indeed, they were generally turned into ridicule by the spectators ; they never could bear the least approximation to the lofty, irregular, and, sometimes inconsistent, imagination of Shakspeare ; and whatever was contrary to their customs they treated with disdain.

The fastidiousness of their taste required the greatest harmony of expression and action ; and the sentiments and acclamations of the hero on the stage were obliged to keep pace with the feelings of the audience. On our theatre, the ghost of Banquo, and the witches, do not diminish the interest or magnificence of the tragedy of *Macbeth* ; but these imaginary characters would have alarmed the ladies, and frightened the gentlemen, on a foreign stage. Molière introduced good comedy to a country where it had hitherto been unknown. Racine taught his hearers the art of

expressing true and delicate sentiments in the least artificial manner; and their taste had been formed on the even beauties and the strict correctness of the imagery of their countrymen. It was after the *Death of Cæsar* had been acted, that Fontenelle told Voltaire he did not consider his genius proper for tragedy, and that his style was too bold, pompous, and splendid. "If so," replied he, "I will go and study your pastorals."

The Cardinal Fleury did not extend the favourable disposition of Louis XIV. to literature; but, though, not approved of, it was tolerated as a means of withdrawing the attention of the people from the intrigues of office, and leaving the ministers of state at ease and leisure to prosecute their political speculations. Fontenelle, too, who was beloved by the old cardinal, contributed to quiet his mind on those points; and, although he was rather fearful of Montesquieu, when he applied for a place at the French academy, as he had satirized him in his *Persian Letters*, yet time and persuasion at last induced him to adopt the opinion, that, when a prosecuted man forgets his injuries, the state ought to remit the causes of

complaint ; and Montesquieu was incorporated in their assembly. Voltaire thought that this example of lenity suited his case also, and he aspired to the same honour ; but De Bose, the president, exclaimed, that he should never be admitted into that august assembly. This De Bose, whose name has since ended as it began, was a man who had succeeded in life because he had not sufficient talents to excite either envy, or fear. He criticised new publications, and usurped the magistracy over those to whom the power, or avarice, of the rich had left nothing but the exercise of their talents. Thus we see that in France at that period, as in the present day, genius was made subservient to money, and that men of learning were obliged to cringe to the rich and powerful, at the expense of truth and feeling, in order to procure a subsistence. The progress of a man's fame, however great his abilities, is very tardy and insupportably galling, unless fanned with the approving breath of those to whom chance, more frequently than justice, has given the dispensations of the goods of the world. Posthumous reputation is the poorest kind of success to one who, like our poets,

Savage and Chatterton, are obliged to beg their bread from the hands of charity. The conviction, that a writer may improve the minds, and command the esteem of succeeding generations, is a pleasing and stimulating reflection to one surrounded with plenty, and in the sunshine of prosperity, but must only add a keener pang to the distressed and languishing mind of the father, or husband, who is toiling without success for his own provision, or for that of his family.

The *Death of Cæsar* followed *Brutus*; when it was announced, that the court found fault with the republican maxims it contained, and it was never printed. In the arrangement of his works, the facts of history were detailed with impartiality and truth; but the bold sentiments of freedom, under a government which was tyrannical in its constitution, and pusillanimous from its administration, could never be tolerated. In addition to these objections, the piece was also in three acts, and destitute of that sweet passion, love, and of those sweet creatures, women. Such glaring deficiencies caused censure, and the moral of the subject was too strong for the effeminate minds

of the French of that day. Plays of this sort are no doubt destitute of the more tranquil affections, and less felt by an audience, because the general interest, which is that of the state, rather than of the individual, comes less home to every breast; but they form fine lessons for the minds of the young; and the energy of a nation may in some degree be estimated by its taste in theatrical representations. Voltaire tried to improve and reform that national turn which his countrymen had for the stage; to this effect he laboured with ardour; and the applauses of his friends were the first fruits of success in his undertaking.

The lines written on the death of Mademoiselle de Couvreur were again the cause of his being obliged to leave Paris; he had loudly rebuked a nation which had refused the rites of decent interment to an actress, because she died excommunicated. The monks being supreme judges over wizards and actors, all of whom were supposed by them to be friends, or servants of the devil, they could not tolerate the boldness of a writer who disputed half their empire; and, although absence disarms persecution, and time weakens the bitterness even of religious malice,

he was sensible, that nothing but some strong literary efforts, or some great theatrical success, could shield him from the attacks of fanaticism. Concealed in a village of Normandy, where he passed himself off for an English baron, and under an English name, his enemies thought him living near Canterbury. When the *Lettres Philosophiques* appeared, the trumpet of excommunication was again sounded, and the work of the author was judged worthy only of the fire. Voltaire did not care for the orders of the keeper of the seals regarding the publication of *La Mort de Cæsar*, and went to Montjeu to assist at the wedding of the Duc de Richelieu, who said he had taken it into his head to marry. Mr. Lepan here makes the following reflections:—One cannot help being surprised at seeing the son of a notary, an estimable man, but one who had lived in a retired manner, and always remained within his sphere, become familiar with the most distinguished societies, and also intimate with princes and kings. No doubt he was much indebted for it to the fertility of his wit; but he was still more so to the boldness of his disposition.

At Montjeu, Voltaire heard of the publication

of the *Lettres Philosophiques*. The parliament having the examination of that work, the author wrote to the Comte d'Argental, a counsellor of that court: "It is said, that after having been my patron, you are going to be my judge. In that case, I flatter myself the Presidents Hainault and Ronjaut, and les Berthier, will join you to render a judgment, by which it will be said that Rabelais, Montaigne, the author of the *Lettres Persannes*, Boyle, Locke, and myself, shall be reputed men of respectability, and discharged free of costs of law." This hope, however, was disappointed. A letter of imprisonment* was directed against him, and his work burnt by the hand of the executioner. Informed of the sentence by the Comte d'Argental, he left Montjeu, and retired to Lorraine, which belonged still to the dukes of that name; from thence he went to Philipsbourg, the camp of the Duke de Richelieu.

Mr. Lèpan mentions, that Jore, after having remitted two copies of the *Lettres Philosophiques*, to their author, had refused a hundred louis for a hundred copies of those letters, which he had

* *Lettre-de-Cachet*.

printed only on the assurance, that permission had been verbally granted. It did not appear probable that he had been imposed upon; however, an edition issued to the public, had the imprint, *Chez Jore, à Rouen*. That unfortunate printer was arrested and conveyed to the Bastille, where he remained fourteen days, and obtained his liberty, after having proved he had no impressions similar to the edition which had been printed: But unluckily his own was seized a few days after, and he was made a bankrupt, by a judgment of the council, in the month of September, and declared incapable of ever being again a printer or a bookseller. Thus, this unfortunate father of a family was imprisoned and totally ruined, by the tyranny of the times. Jore, in the *Memoirs* he had printed on this subject, pretended he had been arrested and seized on the denunciation of Voltaire. As to the edition circulated, the author of that work, in his letter of the 25th March, 1736, owns it was done by a bookseller, to whom he had intrusted it, for the purpose of binding one of the two copies, which Jore had remitted to

him. "But it cannot be supposed," again observes Mr. Lepan, "that Voltaire was not aware that an edition was preparing, as Condorcet pretends, when we read in one of his letters, "in spite of my repeated prayers, at least as to what regards the thoughts of Pascal, that letter has been added to the others."

When the edition was completed, he returned to Paris, and lived with Madame de Martel, who gave him an apartment in her house, in the Rue Long Port, where he thought himself better concealed than in any house of his own. He here announced a new tragedy, which was expected with great earnestness, and in some degree averted the storm. The author of a drama is under the protection of those who, either for instruction, or amusement, resort to the theatres; and he can convey the opinions of the times, and the state of his own feelings, through the medium of fictitious characters. The representations of the stage form a means of communication between men who labour after the acquirement of knowledge, or are engaged in the pursuit of pleasure; and a fine play often produces as good feelings, or as much moral amelio-

ration of character, and is often listened to with as much attention, as the finest pulpit eloquence. The nearer examples of courage in the support of virtue, or constancy and firmness in distress, are brought before our eyes, while the tyranny of worldly opinions is triumphing or trampling over the endurance of philosophy, or fortitude, the more we can reconcile its influence to our own case; and, even if we go back to antiquity for examples, there are few who will not allow the unconquerable spirit of Cato in Utica, whose mind could never be enslaved, although the universe was sinking beneath the powerful grasp of a successful rival, when brought before our view in the glowing colours of modern genius, to be as striking as the most tranquil death-bed scene of the most pious christian, commented on by holy writers, or approved by sanctified discourse.

The impulse, or intoxication, of the mind is in both cases the same; and an elevated and constrained courage can alone support a great danger, or great loss. Our lives pass away in moments uncounted, and often not calculated; we are seldom prepared to combat with affliction; and if the

precepts of philosophy, or a more christian faith, diminish the pangs we feel for the absence of a friend who perishes. The feelings of affection die away with those of indifference, and we gain, like the Phrygian king, who turned all he touched into gold, a great treasure at a greater loss. Our pleasures and our griefs are so far selfish. The withdrawing the society of a favourite renders our circle of enjoyment more limited, and few would wish to spare, or throw away, any of the felicity this world affords. On the stage, we have none of the meanness, or disgusting occurrences, of real life, which in some degree attend the execution of every pious duty, from the bed-chamber to the sepulchre; and the ingratitude of children strikes with horror and surprise, when drawn even from the records of society, unenlightened by divine grace: for, although the progress of civilization has added to our wants, and the propagation of Christianity has given new and perhaps better feelings to our minds, it is undetermined whether the intolerant spirit of the Jews is not yet still emanating from the writings, or festering in the minds, of those who expound the doctrines of an all-righteous Messiah.

In order, therefore, to attempt to shelter himself from the malevolence of the clergy, by ensuring the approbation of the public, Voltaire produced *Eryphile*, which, although applauded, did not completely succeed. He therefore withdrew it, and in eighteen days, *Zara* was finished. This is the most happy specimen of his own peculiar genius, and one of the most successful of his works. Forsaking the track of those whom he had imitated and followed, he maintained a new course. It was called the *Christian Tragedy*, and was often played in preference to Corneille's *Polyeucte*. It has been since translated, and exhibited on the English stage, and is throughout every scene the tragedy of the feeling and virtuous heart.

The distress and tears of the heroine, and the trials she undergoes, between duty and pleasure, at the time her heart beats with desire, form a more brilliant subject for the fancy of the poet, than even the emotions of subdued passions. All that the nature of the story afforded, the author has studiously improved; and in all ages, and all countries, the sacrifice of Zara will be wept for by the young, and recollected by the old.

The versification of the play is so tender, and yet so natural, that the lines appear to have been conceived, and not composed ; a facility by which the poetry of Voltaire is peculiarly distinguished. He bears the appearance of thinking in verse, more than any writer with whom we are acquainted ; and it is difficult to conceive how the measure and the rhyme are preserved, in compositions which betray so little art. In the whole play there are but few lines which the critic will condemn, while there are many hundreds that good taste must applaud, Fontenelle and La Motte persuaded Madame Tencin, one of the literary ladies of Paris at that time, to request Voltaire not to apply his talents to the theatre, but to dedicate himself to other kinds of writing, for which he seemed more fitted. The reply he made to this fine request was by producing *Zara*. Thus we see the clandestine mode in which malice and envy shew themselves, though they never change ; and this advice was only given when the author had put his genius for tragedy beyond all dispute.

In 1734, *Adelaïde* was represented without any

success. It afterwards re-appeared as the *Duke de Foix*, in 1762, with alterations ; and again, in 1765, under its original title, with great applause. It contains more stage-effect than any of his tragedies. The story is not founded in fiction. A Duke de Bretagne, in 1387, ordered a Nobleman of Bavalan to assassinate the high-constable of Clisson. The next day, he told the duke that his orders had been executed, who, struck with the horror of the crime, gave way to feelings of the most violent despair. His friend for some time allowed him to indulge his remorse and repentance, and then relieved him by the assurance that he loved him too much to obey his orders. On its first representation in Paris, when Vendome asked the affecting question of "Art thou content, Couci *?" the audience drowned the rest of the play with the cries of *Coussi, Coussi*.

Voltaire, in a letter to one of his friends at Paris, tells the following story : " A rich banker of Paris having been requested to compose a march for one of the regiments of Charles XII., applied to the musician Mouret for his assistance. The

* Es-tu content, Couci ?

march was played at the banker's house, in the presence of his friends and all the best judges. It was decided by them to be execrable; Mouret withdrew his music, but inserted it in an opera on the eve of representation. The banker and his friends went to the performance, and the march was very much applauded. 'Oh,' said they to Mouret, 'this is just what we wanted. Why did you not give us a piece in that style?' 'Gentlemen,' replied the musician, 'it is the same I had the honour of repeating before you.' He then proceeds to observe, that truth and good taste are only confirmed by time, and that this reflection ought to humble the wit of all journalists: that they ought to be slow in judging or condemning, when they are uncertain of the opinion of the public. The great success of *Zara* on the stage, shewed the author how necessary it was, that love should be conspicuous in a piece; and in making the ground-work of *Adelaïde* entirely consist of this passion, he flattered the taste of his countrymen, and their vanity in making the heroes of it Frenchmen.

CHAPTER IV.

PERHAPS the publication of the *Temple of Taste*, in which both the living and the dead are criticised with too much levity, may have impeded the success of the first representation of *Adelaïde*, for private resentment often distorts the understanding of the critic, and both works made their appearance at the same period. It was on this subject, that those enmities took place between the Abbé Desfontaines* and Voltaire, which caused so many troubles to the latter. It is only necessary to mention at present that Desfontaines criticised freely the judgments exposed in the *Temple*

* “ L’histoire de l’Abbé Desfontaines étoit celle d’un homme qui, ayant un doux penchant pour les plaisirs de Sodôme et de Gomorrhe, avait été condamné au supplice pour avoir séduit de pauvres petits ramoneurs, et qui ne fut arraché des mains du bourreau, que par le zèle ardent, infatigable, et les soins généreux de Voltaire. Pour prix d’un tel service vous croyez que Desfontaines ne fut qu’ingrat? bagatelle! il calomnia son libérateur.”

of *Taste*, which displeased the author, who was also tormented on the same account by the keeper of the Seals. He wrote on that subject to his friend Thiriot, "I am not yet quite settled; I was about finishing my nest, and have great fear of being driven from it for ever." Voltaire asserts that *Adelaïde* underwent no alterations as the *Duke de Foix*; but in this he flatters his vanity at the expense of truth; for we have a proof in the various readings collected after his death, that he must have devoted a very considerable portion of his time to its revision before he would allow its repetition. In its new form of the *Duke de Foix*, it contains more beauty of arrangement and execution. There was, however, sufficient tragical interest and tragical beauty in *Adelaïde*, to have preserved it from the fate it experienced, had not the audience been influenced by the party spirit of men writhing under the lash of satire.

The weapon of retort strikes keener in proportion to the ability of the possessor; but a rod may be prepared for the back of fools, even by an inferior pen, and a host of enemies be defied and defeated,

by an imperfect stanza. Sensibility to an attack of this kind is the greatest triumph the author can obtain. Prudence, therefore, as well as pride, ought to suggest disregard, or indifference, which will leave the writer to be punished by what Dr. Johnson considers as the most painful of all reflections, the recollection of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The *Duke de Foix* was acted in 1762, when Voltaire was at Berlin, and was tolerably well received, though not with complete success. Le Kain, the famous actor, introduced it under the name of *Amelia*, on the French stage. It subsequently took its old name of *Adelaïde*. Some lines, written on it, shew it was not held in very great esteem in those days*.

The *Temple of Taste* caused Voltaire more enemies than any thing he ever wrote ; for time has, in

* Adelaïde du Guesclin,
Renait sous le nom d'Amélie ;
L'auteur croit que par son Génie
Et les graces de la Gaussin,
Elle paroîtra rajeunie.
C'est une vieille recrepie
Sous les parures de Berlin,
Qui vient mourir dans sa patrie.

a great degree, verified the sentiments and opinions of the author. When an author judges his contemporaries, he incurs the hatred of all those who admire their works, and there are few who have not some idol whose image they consider as defaced by a work of criticism. Their own vanity too suffers in proportion ; and vanity is one of the most powerful of human frailties. It is more tender even than our honour, or our religion ; because, when attacked, we ourselves suffer in our own secret good opinion, whereas honour and religion, though undoubtedly the strongest principles of many, are yet by many more put on to enable them to pass current through the world, like the stamp upon a coin, which gives it relative value in the country to which it belongs. They are also the marks to make others judge of us as we wish, and, like learning, are most valuable when nothing else remains ; for it generally happens, that those who care the most for what they call their honour, are possessed of fewest things to render life desirable ; but it is essential to the well-being and happiness of every one, that their vanity should keep pace with the

good esteem they wish others to have of them; and, in every age, in every country, from the monarch to the clown, and from the courtier in the drawing-room surrounded by rank and beauty, to the philosopher, or the hermit who spends his life in retirement and study, it is the same feeling which incites them in the same pursuit. It is the basis of love, that most fantastic but most powerful passion, which can never be fully felt but once, and when once felt, can never be forgotten.

Voltaire had, during his retirement, conceived the happy plan of making his countrymen acquainted with the manners, the morals, and the philosophy of the English nation. With this intention he published some letters combating the opinions of Descartes and Pascal; the two great authorities of the preceding century.

The assumption of Locke's hypothesis, that God has the power, in case he had the inclination, of imparting to matter the faculty of thinking, alarmed every party possessed of an opinion; and his strictures on the thoughts of Pascal were said to betray a masked attempt at destroying the fundamental principles of the christian religion.

The doctrine of Descartes respecting innate ideas was refuted by Locke, a writer with whom the French were at that time very little acquainted; and the Jansenists, who respected the opinions of Pascal as much as those of Saint Augustin, and were exasperated when they saw a poet sit in judgment on their champion, cried aloud for redress. The letters were accordingly condemned in the usual manner. Voltaire had recourse to the mean expedients of the treachery of friends, and the falsification of his manuscripts, to excuse the boldness of his remarks. The Keeper of the Seals, however, Chauvelin, and even the Cardinal de Fleury himself, protected him, perhaps from a secret admiration of his talents, or from conviction; and a visit the author made to Philipsbourg, averted the storm. He ended by returning laughing at his own fears, and again throwing down the gauntlet of religious disquisition. The *Letters on the English Nation* have, however, the merit of rendering one of the greatest services to France, that it was in the power of an individual to bestow—the introduction of inoculation. The numerous experiments made among

the eastern nations, and the English, regarding the small pox, were there detailed with the greatest perspicuity and plainness; and, although superstition opposed scruples to this, as to all other useful innovations, the opinions of some physicians agreed with those of the author. We may also consider, as their due, one of the enterprises which did most honour to the administration of the Cardinal de Fleury, to the eighteenth century, and to the dissemination of knowledge. In France the system of Newton had gained many partisans amongst young persons of distinguished and promising talents for the sciences. Voltaire encouraged them to speak more openly. Clairant, Maupertuis, and La Condamine, shook the system of Descartes; while d'Aguesseau, and some other old philosophers, defended opinions which they had adopted in their youth. The Cardinal de Fleury, prompted by the Comte de Maurepas, was desirous of verifying one of the most important hypotheses of Newton, *viz.*: the method by which he had determined the figure of the earth.

It was proposed to undertake an expedition to measure a degree near the pole, and one near the

equator. Maupertuis, Clairant, Camus, and Lemonnier, were sent to Torneo in Sweden, upon the confines of Lapland; and La Condamine, Bouguer, and Godin, to Peru. The last set off in the month of May, 1735, the others a year afterwards. Their experiments confirmed the calculations of Newton, who had determined with as much exactitude, in an English library, the figure of this globe, as if he had visited the polar circle, or had enjoyed a complete view of the universe from the summit of the mountain of Chimborazo. Four years were allowed for the performance of this voyage, but the time it occupied was prolonged to ten. La Condamine, and his fellow-travellers, evinced an inflexible ardour in completing the object they had in view; and their return home was hailed like that of triumphant warriors to their native country. Indeed, allowing for the ignorance of the greater part of a population who could not estimate their services, but will always shout at the sound of a drum, or trumpet, they were more warmly received, and with more justice; at least as far as adventurers in a cause useful to society are superior to those

who risk their lives for popular glory, or gain, a still more empty reputation.

It was to Fontenelle that his countrymen were indebted for their acquaintance with the manners of a class of men who passed their lives in seclusion and quiet; and his *Eloge des Savans* excited as much interest as *The Lives of Plutarch*. *The Letters on the English Nation*, also, censure the too free imitation of the style of Shakspeare; the author being fearful that the French writers would copy his gross violations of good taste; for, although posterity has given due honours to the fame of our poet, that, as well as antiquity, have spread a veil over his absurdities. If, however, much of the overcharged and false imagery of that author passes for the sublime, his genius and his errors form an æra in the annals of literature, and what would be disapproved of in a copyist, is held in veneration in the original. The barbarous style of Otway is ridiculed, and Congreve is, perhaps, justly preferred to our other writers of Comedy.

Soon after the return of Voltaire from Philipsbourg, the *Epistle to Urania*, which had been, till

that time, kept secret, was published ; and the indiscretion with which some of his friends repeated fragments from the *Maid of Orleans*, was the cause of a fresh alarm. The keeper of the seals, who had formerly screened him from injustice, threatened to confine him in the worst and deepest of state prisons, if any part of the poem made its appearance ; and Condorcet asserts, that it was during these tempestuous times, that the lieutenant of police, Herault, one day said to Voltaire, " Write what you will, you never can overturn the Christian religion." The poet replied, " We shall see." It was the same magistrate that he one day asked, What punishment would be inflicted on one who should forge false letters of imprisonment*? The answer was, " They would be hanged ; that will be but right ; let us hope that those who sign the true will be served in the same way."

The great circulation of the *Maid of Orleans*, is a proof of the degeneracy of the times, though, perhaps, not of the corruption of taste. During

* Lettres-de-Cachet.

the regency, this work was much in vogue; and, although it was not printed till 1762, young persons of both sexes knew it by heart from surreptitious copies. Although it may be acknowledged as a master-piece of the author's against the superstition of the times, and a most perfect specimen of satirical composition, yet, in removing a superstructure of priestcraft, he has defaced the altar of religion.

We now come to a period in his life which has generally been considered as the most extraordinary; it is without precedent in any other country, or in any other century, with respect to a person who had deservedly obtained so much fame as an author, and is a kind of anomaly which French manners are alone capable of reconciling: it was his residence with Madame du Châtelet, at Cirey. According to his own account, wearied with the persecutions which his works excited; disgusted with the insolence and vanity of other writers; disappointed, perhaps, in his intercourse with the great; and smarting under the criticisms of his contemporaries; he thought it necessary to change his

mode of life. The fortune which descended to him from his father, and which had been subsequently increased, was ample. Thus, to the advantages of possessing wealth, he added that of being indebted for it to himself, and its use, although it could not defeat envy, secured him the means of escaping from unjust oppression. Ancient philosophers praised poverty, because they made a merit of necessity, or because riches led to confiscation; and their limited intercourse with foreign countries rendered the secret conveyance of property dangerous and uncertain. Their dealings were mostly confined to their own cities, and their own countrymen; and the transfer of money was attended with trouble and inconvenience. Their climate also subjected them to fewer real wants, and the luxury of the wealthy approached more to riot and debauchery, than to convenience and comfort. Voltaire effected this change, not by marriage, but by entering into a strict intimacy with a married woman of high rank and great beauty, and retiring to her house upon the frontiers of Champagne and Lorraine. From thence he travelled into Hol-

land ; but finally returned to Cirey in the month of June, 1736, (under the promise of protection from the Duc de Richelieu and the keeper of the seals,) where he resided, more or less, domesticated with her for the space of fifteen years.

Emilie de Breteuil, Marquise du Châtelet, was born in 1706 ; she was the daughter of the Baron de Breteuil, master of the ceremonies of the court of Louis XIV. Her beauty appears to have been very great ; and tradition has exalted her wit and learning ; as these gifts are not often united, she who possesses them is sure to be sought after and admired. When young, Emilie married the Marquis du Châtelet Lomont, a lieutenant-general of the French forces, and of a distinguished family. She then applied to the ancient and modern authors, and to mathematics. She did not, like most of her sex, confine herself to the cultivation of those accomplishments which give lovers pleasure before marriage, and annoy them afterwards ; for her first publication was an essay on Leibnitz, entitled, "*Institutions de Physique*," addressed to her son, whom she was educating. The ideas of the German school, however, soon appeared to her

as visionary, and she quitted them for those of Newton, whose *Elements* she translated, and upon which she commented. This work possessed merit; for it was printed after her death, and revised by Clairant; who rendered it worthy both of the author and the critic.

There are few women, of any temperament, who are not addicted to some vice, or to some pleasure. Though the Marquise du Châtelet loved celebrity and literature by profession, these were, even with her, secondary passions to intrigue and gambling. The former rendered her unfaithful to her husband, and afterwards to her lover; and the latter disturbed their mutual peace by embarrassing their fortune. No woman, however, united the power of pursuing dissipation and study at the same time, with so much success; and beholders saw with astonishment the commentatrix of Newton, after leaving a card-table, instruct, and converse with the learned and the gay. Her attachment to Voltaire added to the happiness of his life; and, though she occasionally provoked his jealousy, he loved her the better when it passed away; for, if any thing real, or which exists in

this world, can at all approach to the representations of poetical love, or imaginary affection, it is a connexion of this nature, unmixed with interest, and unfettered by restraint. The sanctity of matrimony and the awful virtue of an amiable wife, spread a veil over the raptures of enjoyment which it would be worse than sacrilege to pollute by investigation; but secret and stolen pleasures are remembered with fervency and devotion, when the others are obliterated and forgotten.

It is doubtful whether a woman who abandons the duties of her station in life for the prosecution of the sciences is not blameable, even if she succeeds: but the same powers of mind which lead her to the knowledge of truth, teach her what it is requisite for her to perform in her family. The wife of George II., and the queen of England, who was the mediatrix between the two greatest metaphysicians in Europe, Clarke and Leibnitz, and was able to judge between them, never descended from the dignity or duties of her station; and learning may be as proud of the patronage of beauty as the protection of a monarch.

Congeniality of pursuit also contributed to

render the friendship of the two philosophers more pure, and their love more lasting. Their retreat was embellished with gardens and an extensive library. A museum of natural history and other curiosities were added. The apartments of the lady of the house and her friend, were as splendid and as elegant as money and good taste could conspire to render them, according to the description given, in 1738, by a person who was an inmate, and for some time a friend of the inhabitants of Cirey*.

“ I had only had a transient view of his apartments; but he now made me stop, and admire them, and here I have preserved their description:

“ The little wing they occupy is so connected with the rest of the mansion, that the entrance is at the lower part of the great stair-case. There is a small ante-chamber, and you then proceed to the main apartment, which is also not large, but low, and hung with crimson velvet, which is the winter furniture. There are a few compartments of tapestry, and several in the ceiling in which handsome pictures are framed: there, are also,

* Madame de Graffigny.

looking-glasses, beautiful corners of china varnish, porcelains, Mahomedan priests, and an infinite number of things of that nature, dear and far-fetched;—every thing, indeed, which ingenuity has been able to invent. The floor is of the most delicate cleanliness. There is a ring-case in the room, in which are twelve rings of engraved stones, besides two diamonds. From hence you proceed to the small gallery, which is between thirty and forty feet long; between its windows are two very fine statues of Venus, and of the Farnesian Hercules. The other side of the windows is divided into closets, one for holding books, and the other for instruments of natural philosophy. Between them is a stove in the wall, to warm the apartment, before which is placed an unfinished Cupid on a large pedestal, which will, when complete, hide the appearance of the furnace. “The gallery is wainscotted and varnished over with light yellow, and abundantly supplied with writing-desks, tables, and every thing requisite. Further on is a room not yet finished; the folding screens are the same; it is in the best taste, and abundantly furnished; there is a door in the

middle which leads into the garden, where there is a very pretty grotto.

This concludes the description of the rooms occupied by Voltaire—those of Madame du Châtelet are equally luxurious; her room is wainscotted, and varnished light yellow, with strings of light blue, a niche, the same framed with Indian papers. The bed is of watered blue, and every thing is so much varied, that even the basket for the dog is blue and yellow. The wood of the elbow-chairs, writing-desks, corners, looking-glasses, and silver frames, are all of a most admirable beauty. A most splendid glass-door leads to the library, which is as yet unfinished, the carving is as fine as that of a snuff-box, and is intended to be ornamented with looking-glasses and pictures by Paul Veronese. At one corner, there is a small closet, the ceiling of which is blue, and was painted and varnished by a scholar of Martin; it has a singular entrance through a window, and a terrace from which there is a remarkably fine prospect. The bathing-chambers also correspond with the rest of the apartments in elegance and taste. The remainder of the house, however, is badly contriv-

ed, without any regard to cleanliness, or comfort." Most of the philosophers then in France spent some time at Cirey; among the rest, Maupertuis, whose enmity was afterwards so fatal to its inhabitant. Madame du Châtelet learnt English, and was able to read Pope and Locke at the end of three months; she acquired Italian as speedily; and when Algarotti visited them, he found her knowledge of the language to be of use to him in his work of "*Newtonianismo per le Dame*." But ambition, the ruling passion of the philosopher, pursued him even in this retreat; and he lived with a friend who was more desirous of his enjoying happiness than capable of producing it herself.

Secluded in his mode of existence, without the kind of society to which he had been habituated, and of which he was so fond; and, above all, without repose of mind, he gave himself up to those studies which have rendered his name famous in so many different places and so many different ways. In order that he might be as completely as possible abstracted from worldly concerns, he intrusted them to the care of a very

intelligent priest, who, although a Jansenist, was a philosopher; his name was Moussinot, of the convent of Saint Mery, a man of good property, simple and virtuous in his way of life, and devoted with equal fidelity to his conventual and ecclesiastical duties, and to those of friendship; he was equally trusted by his own brotherhood, and by his more enlightened client.

Whether it was that Voltaire wished to shew the versatility of his genius, or that he was seduced by the hope of excelling those mathematicians, whose labours and calculations he had learnt to appreciate and understand, he followed and shared in the studies of Madame du Châtelet; armed himself with the compass and the telescope; questioned the authorities and deductions of Clairant and Bernouilli, flattered his enemy Maupertuis, obtained an introduction to the Academy of Sciences, and wrote the elements of Newton.

At this time, the system of Descartes prevailed; a few young geometers alone had the courage to dissent; and there was no work existing in the French language that illustrated the grand discoveries which had been made in England. The

Chancellor d'Aguesseau was a Cartesian, because the system had been fashionable in his youth ; and refused the author a privilege for the publication of his performance. His respect for ancient customs impeded his activity, and narrowed his views of legislation ; and his death caused France to regret that his great virtues had slumbered in inactivity, and that his rare qualities had been lost to the world. He would not suffer the novel of *Cleveland* to be printed, except on condition that the author would change his religion. The work of Voltaire was, however, useful, as it contributed to render the philosophy of Newton as intelligible to those who were not proficient in the higher branches of geometry, as the nature of the subject would admit. The sentiments in the work are just, and presented in a forcible and vigorous manner ; and, as the author always condemned the introduction of pleasantry on philosophical topics, of which Fontenelle has given the example, his writings are not embellished with any ornaments foreign to the subject. When the work appeared, it was useful even to some philosophers ; and the objections raised against it shew how little Newton was at that time under-

stood. He gives due praise to all those whose writings he criticised, and respects the genius of Descartes and Leibnitz.

The good which Descartes has done to mankind, and the service he has rendered, by delivering the human mind from the yoke of authority (as Newton and Locke had cured it of the passion for systems) are entitled to the greatest thanks and the greatest praise. Voltaire had the courage to attack their opinions, when those of Leibnitz prevailed in Germany and the north, and those of Descartes in his native country. He was, soon after, a candidate for the prize given by the academy of sciences, on the nature of fire and the propagation of heat; and he assumed this appropriate motto:

“ Ignis ubique latet naturam amplectitur omnem;
Cuncta parit, renovat, dividit, unit, alit.”

Madame du Châtelet was also engaged in the competition; but the prize was adjudged to Euler. The formula, which Euler had added to his essay, on the rapidity with which sound is conveyed, which Newton had sought for in vain, and which addition is very superior to the

original work, seems to have decided the judges in his favour. The essays, however, of Madame du Châtelet and Voltaire are those in which we find experiments accurately made and distinctly explained; and, although the prize was not awarded them, the academicians ordered their works to be printed at the end of those which they approved. Madame du Châtelet maintained the existence of a central fire, an opinion capable of being supported in many instances; but which, in these times, philosophers have admitted with too great eagerness, and have not sufficiently examined; it being very convenient for any system to have so great a quantity of caloric always at command. Voltaire's essay contains a number of observations, which possess novelty, and is written in a modest and philosophical style; fearful of making any affirmation which is not supported by the senses and calculation. Its errors are those of the state of knowledge of the times in which it was written, although it has departed from that which was then in vogue, among the members of the academy.

The dispute on the measure of forces at that time

occupied mathematicians. Voltaire, in a memorial presented to, and approved of, by the academy, opposed Descartes and Newton against Leibnitz. His success, however, in prosecuting the sciences was not equal to his wishes; and, after having employed some years in experimental philosophy, he consulted Clairant relative to his progress, who had the frankness to tell him that, even after obstinate labour, he might only expect to arrive at mediocrity in the business he had undertaken; and that he would most probably throw away much time, which might be better employed in the cultivation of poetry and ethics. He followed the advice of his friend, and returned to those studies to which his inclination incessantly prompted. We are indebted to his residence at Cirey, for *Alzire*, *Zulime*, *Mahomet*, part of the *Life of Louis XIV*, and some other works. Here he also collected materials for his *Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations from Charlemagne to the present day*. *Alzire* was played for the first time on the 27th of February, 1736. In this tragedy, it was the author's design to shew how much the true principles of the

Christian religion are superior to the natural virtues; and the fifth act, the best part of the play, only cost him the labour of a few hours' application after supper. The queen Marie Luzenski, and the Cardinal de Fleury, expressed their approbation; and he came to Paris to enjoy his success.

In 1736, he entertained the project of having the principal scenes of his poem of the *Henriade*, painted on tapestry, by Oudry, the director of the manufactory of Beauvais. "It appears to me," he wrote to the Abbé Moussinot, "that the temple of love, the assassination of Guise, that of Henry III., Saint Louis shewing his posterity to Henry IV., would be fine subjects for a picture." Oudry having asked thirty thousand francs, and the poet not wishing to make so great a sacrifice, he was obliged to renounce his project. In the seclusion which Voltaire had imposed upon himself at Cirey, he composed *Mahomet*, *Merope*, and his seven *Philosophical Discourses on Man*, amusing himself in the intervals with natural philosophy and chemistry. He would have been too fortunate had he been

contented with these works. But the perusal of *la Semaine du Parnasse*, written by the Abbé Desfontaines, and in which he criticised Voltaire, inflamed his anger. In order to revenge himself, he published (much against his own tranquillity) a pamphlet entitled, *Le Préservatif*, entirely directed against Desfontaines. Voltaire was the more to blame in so doing, because he knew better than any one else, that Desfontaines was not the real author of the work of which he accused him, and for which he was arrested. He knew this, since, independently of the memoirs which he had composed himself in his defence, the lieutenant of police had written to l'Abbé Bignon, the king's librarian, to express to him his regret for having been deceived as to the orders he had given for the arrest of Desfontaines.

The abbé answered the *Préservatif* by another libel, having for title, *The Voltéromanie*, and which, having the signature of a young advocate, could easily be denied by its real author. Mutual friends were desirous of making the two adversaries compromise; but Voltaire would not consent. The affair was at last referred to the tribunal of M. Herault,

lieutenant-general of police, at the solicitations of the Marquis d'Argenson, and several other powerful persons. M. Herault sent for Desfontaines, who was obliged to sign, in a sort of declaration, a denial, which was printed in the public papers. This denial was written by the Marquis d'Argenson's own hand.

About this time, also, his quarrel with Saint Hyacinthe took place; in this, however, Saint Hyacinthe was the aggressor. He published a work called the *Deification of the Doctor Aristarchus Masso*, in which Voltaire is represented as submitting to be caned by a French officer. More notice was taken of the libel than either the author, or his subject, deserved*.

* Extrait de l'ouvrage intitulé, *Déification du Docteur Aristarchus Masso*.

“ Un officier François, nommé B——, s'entretenait avec quelques personnes que la curiosité avait, comme moi, attirées au pied de la double montagne. Un poète de la même nation, portant le nez au vent, comme un cheval housard, vint effrontément se mettre de la conversation; en parlant à tort et à travers, s'abandonna à quelques saillies insultantes, que l'officier désapprouva. Le poète s'en mit peu en peine et continua. L'officier, s'éloignant alors, alla dans un détour, par où il savait que ce poète devait passer pour aller parler à un comédien. Il y vint en effet, et accompagné d'un homme à qui il récitait des vers, et qu'il ne croyait pas devoir être témoin de ses infor-

Voltaire scarcely had recovered from the fatigues caused to him by this affair, when he de-

tunes : car l'officier, arrêtant le poëte par le bras." " J'ai toujours oui dire que les impudens étaient lâches, lui dit-il, j'en veux faire l'épreuve, et ne puis mieux m'adresser qu'à vous. Voyons, monsieur, le bel esprit, si vous vous servirez bien de cette épée que vous portez, je ne sais pourquoi, ou préparez vous à recevoir de cette canne le châtiment de votre insolence." Telle qu'une C. pâlit et s'effraie aux éclats redoublés du tonnerre, tel le poëte pâlit au discours de l'officier ; et la frayeur lui inspirant avec le repentir, des sentimens d'humilité et de prudence :

J'ai péché, lui dit-il et je ne prétends pas
Employer ma valeur à défendre mes fautes ;
J'offre mon échine et mes côtes,
Au juste châtiment que me prépare ton bras.
Frappe, ne crains point, frappe je te pardonne ;
Ma vie est peu de chose, et je te l'abandonne,
Tu vois en ce moment un poëte éperdu,
Digne d'être puni, content d'être battu,
N'opposer nul effort à la valeur suprême.
B — n'aura point de vainqueur que lui-même.

‘ Ces beaux discours ne servent ici de rien, dit l'officier, défendez-vous, ou prenez garde à vos épaules.” Le poëte n'ayant pas la hardiesse de se défendre, l'officier le chargea de quantité de coups de bâton, dans l'espérance que l'outrage et la douleur lui inspireraient du courage ; mais la prudence du poëte redoubla à proportion des coups qu'il reçut : ce qui fit que l'homme qui l'avait accompagné s'écria en s'adressant à l'officier :

Arrêtez,

parted for Brussels with Madame du Châtelet, where that lady had a law-suit with the house of Honsbrank. He came back to Paris a few months after; calculating to have remained in it a month, but he was detained nearly three, having been taken ill in the Rue Cloche-perche,

Arrêtez, arrêtez l'ardeur de votre bras,
 Battre un homme à jeu sur, n'est pas d'une belle ame,
 Et le cœur est digne de blâme,
 Contre les gens qui n'en ont pas.

“ L'officier alors, après avoir ainsi disposé le poète à ses remontrances: ‘Sectateur des Muses, lui dit-il, apprenez qu'il est plus important d'être sage, qu'il n'est nécessaire d'être poète.’ En disant ces mots, il jeta dans un champ le bâton qu'il avait en main. Mais ô prodige! ce bâton devint dans l'instant un arbre, *etc.*”

“ Le trait est sanglant, et nous nous garderons bien de le justifier, quoique M. de Voltaire n'y soit pas nommé, ni désigné dans aucune manière, mais de la modération, du mépris, une plaisanterie, où le silence même, auraient pu le faire tomber. Ce ne fût point le parti que prit le poète, qui s'y croyait offensé. Il perdit la tête dès que la pièce fut parvenue jusqu'à lui. Aussitôt, bien loin de dissimuler, il écrivit à M. Berger la lettre qui suit.

“ Mon cher ami, voulez-vous me rendre un signalé service? Il faut voir Saint Hyacinthe. Je ne le connais pas direz-vous; il faut le connoître, on connoit tout le monde quand il s'agit d'un ami. Mais Saint Hyacinthe est un homme décrié. Qu'importe, voici de quoi il s'agit; il est cité dans le livre infâme de Desfontaines, pour avoir écrit, contre moi, une libelle intitulée,

Hôtel de Brie. He left it at the end of November to proceed to Cirey, and from thence to Brussels. His presence, however, rekindled the flames of animosity and envy; and, in the space of three months, twenty pamphlets condemned *Alzire*, and the decision of the public; for, in spite of the glory of the work, and the success of the writer, malice prevailed, and the favour of the court was transitory and fleeting.

The poem *Du Mondain* was also the subject of a fresh persecution. The clergy sounded the alarm, and the devotees passed the watch-word of impiety; the Cardinal de Fleury also, and the keeper of the seals, were prejudiced by the rumours of bigotry, and Cirey again became the

Déification d'Aristarchus Masso; or, je ne l'ai jamais offensé ce Saint Hyacinthe. Pourquoi donc imprimer contre moi des impostures si affreuses? Veut-il les soutenir? Je ne le crois pas. Que lui coutera-t-il de signer qu'il n'en est pas l'auteur, ou qu'il les déteste, ou qu'il ne m'a point en vue? Exigez de lui un mot qui lave cet outrage, et qui prévienne les suites d'une querelle cruelle. Faites-lui écrire un petit mot dont il résulte la paix et l'honneur, je vous en conjure. Courez, rendez-moi ce service. Je ne demande que le repos, procurez-le à votre ami".

Vie Polémique de Voltaire.

A Cirey, 8 Janvier, 1739.

asylum of one who had so often been obliged to fly his country, and fear his friends. On reading the *Mondain*, one cannot help smiling at the prejudices and stupidity of the times; and it is rather remarkable, that Chauvelin, who had so often threatened to imprison Voltaire, should soon after be arrested himself, accused of selling to the Emperor Charles VI., the secrets and interests of the French government.

The cause of philosophy and letters was more effectually promoted under his successor, the Baron de Breteuil, than it had been under himself, or the Cardinal de Fleury. After retiring to the house of Madame du Châtelet, in order more effectually to elude the search of government, he inserted in the public papers, that he was resident in England, and dated all his letters from Cambridge. These subterfuges did not, however, entirely quiet his mind, and he would, in reality have left France, had not his love for his mistress, as Duvernet says, out-balanced his other apprehensions. One may see by several letters to his steward, in how great a state of uneasiness and agitation he existed. "I repeat

to you, my friend, my entreaties, to say that I am in England. I have very strong reasons for this; I find myself under the necessity of having always before me a large sum of money."

In the midst of this storm he had the gratification of receiving a letter from the Prince Royal of Prussia, styling himself his affectionate friend, and soliciting the honour of being permitted to become worthy of his instructions, and also offering him an asylum from his persecutors.

The young Frederic had been sent from Rhinberg by his father, who had conceived the project of having him beheaded as a deserter, because he attempted to travel without his permission. Yielding, however, to the remonstrances of the imperial ambassador, he mitigated the punishment, and satisfied himself with causing the Prince to be present at the execution of one of his travelling companions. Although he had only received from his father the education of a soldier, yet he studied geometry, metaphysics, music, and the fine arts, together with the French language and philosophy. The power of a long attach-

ment, however, detained Voltaire with his friend Madame du Châtelet, and the intercourse of the Prince and the philosopher was confined to correspondence. They, however, mutually consulted each other on their works; and the refugee of Cirey, in fancy, imagined himself transported back to the periods when kings became the followers of sages. An occurrence, indicative of Frederic's goodness of heart, happened at this time, which ought not to be omitted. Happy would it have been for him had he manifested these dispositions in his future life; but power and prosperity harden the heart, and destroy the intimacy of those who have lived friends in poverty, and supported together the frowns of fortune.

Wolf, who had written some works on metaphysics, was accused of atheism, at the instigation of the theologian Lange. The old King ordered him to give up his office of professor in the university of Halle, and to leave the town in twenty-four hours, under pain of being hanged. He fled to the Prince Royal, who was attached to his interests, and referred

the dispute to Voltaire as an umpire, during the time that he was himself banished from his own country; and, when he succeeded to the throne, he recalled Wolf, and put him in his ancient situation of professor. He also invested Algarotti, who had published some dialogues of natural philosophy, in 1738, and who had come to Berlin in 1740, with the dignity of a count. Algarotti was the son of a respectable tradesman at Venice. He had acquired very extensive knowledge, and had travelled over almost all Europe. Elegance was the principal characteristic of his style.

A few years, however, cured the King of his passion for these unintelligible and antiquated systems; and he wrote the *Anti-Machiavel*, in which he opposes the idea, that the interests of a Prince necessarily render him an enemy to his people and his neighbours. To this work Voltaire wrote a Preface, in which he complimented the taste and talents of the King, and repaid all the flattery which Frederic had bestowed on him in his Preface to the *Henriade*. Indeed it is said that when he saw the King, near Cleves, he exclaimed, "Sir, if I had been Machiavel, and had

any influence over a young Prince, I would have advised him to write against myself."

The work was not published when Frederic's father died; but the cares of government did not distract him from pursuits of a scientific nature; and, with Madame du Châtelet, he perused the unfinished work in the portfolio of Voltaire: but a circumstance occurred which more especially induced him to defer the publication of the *Anti-Machiavel*. It was his quarrel with the Bishop of Liege.

The bishop asserted a right upon the lordship of Herstal, which the House of Brandenburg claimed, as a part of the succession to the Prince of Orange. In 1732, Frederic William, the present King's father, had possessed himself of it; but the inhabitants refused to acknowledge him. This Prince was on the point of proceeding to extremities, when he died; and the Liegeois, encouraged by the bishop, who thought he had only a poet to manage, refused submission to the new King. Frederic, however, immediately quartered a dozen companies of infantry and a squadron of dragoons at Hern, who lived there.

at the prelate's expense. The bishop applied for assistance to the Emperor of Austria, to France, and to Holland. The first of these referred the matter to the Diet of the Empire, and the two others acted as mediators. The King consented to renounce his claim for one hundred and fifty thousand crowns, which the bishop paid.

Frederic had promised to come to Brussels, in disguise, and Voltaire expected him there when a courier, sent by the monarch, announced that his master was detained at the Castle of Slusmeuse, two leagues from Cleves, by a violent fever. Voltaire went there immediately, found the King in bed, and Maupertuis by his side.

As soon as Frederick got well, he took the mathematician to Berlin, and sent the poet to the Hague, to get the *Anti-Machiavel* printed. Voltaire came back to Brussels to prosecute the law-suit of his friend Madame du Châtelet. The inundations of the Meuse and the Rhine delayed him much in this journey, and he did not arrive till the 6th of January. Madame du Châtelet was at Paris; from thence Voltaire was to have come and spent some time with her, when he undertook

his journey to Cleves. It appears that this inattention of her friend displeased the Marchioness; she complained of it to the Comte d'Argental, to whom her lover was obliged to apologize; he observed "that the injustice of the complaints of that lady had caused him more pleasure than the courts of all the kings could afford." This dispute seems to have hindered Voltaire from arriving at the capital till towards Easter. The representations of *Zulime*, which were performed three times, had taken place during the last illness of the Duchess de Richelieu. From that time, *Mahomet* and *Merope* occupied all his attention; he told the Comte d'Argental that he laboured more at these two tragedies than any other of his compositions. *Mahomet* was performed at Lisle in the month of April, 1741; its author went there on purpose to witness the effect it would produce; it was played four times. Lanoue, the first actor of that town, represented the character of *Mahomet*. During the first representation of the tragedy, Voltaire received a note from the King of Prussia, which announced a victory he had just obtained at Molwitz. The

author interrupted the play to read this letter to the spectators. "You will see," said he to those around him, "that this affair of Molwitz will cause mine to succeed."

The law-suit which called the Marquise du Châtelet and Voltaire to Brussels having taken a new turn, and as this affair was to be settled at Cirey, the travellers returned in the beginning of winter. Among the labours which at this place occupied the poet was the alteration of *Mahomet*, which he looked upon as his finest tragedy; he left it, however, in the month of January to follow Madame du Châtelet into Franche Comté, at the Comtesse d'Austrac's. That lady let her house to them in Paris, to which they went in the beginning of February, probably to assist at the representation of *Mahomet*.

To return to the suppression of the *Anti-Machiavel*, the bookseller had demanded a good deal of money, and Frederick, who was perhaps pleased at the idea of acquiring celebrity as an author, let the impressions proceed. It is not true, however, as Voltaire has alleged, that Frederick had not a design in publishing the work; for, in his retreat at Rhinesberg, he had

formed a general plan of government, to which he remained faithful to the end of his life.

At Rhinesberg he intended passing some time, in order to recover from a fever caught in Westphalia, and to resume his ancient studies; but the death of the Emperor Charles VI., caused by eating too large a dish of mushrooms, changed the political face of Europe, and the King availed himself of the weakness of the daughter to assert some ancient claims in Silesia. The battle of Molwitz proved to the Austrians what forces they had to contend with; and Frederic, in a poem written some years afterwards, celebrated the deaths of those who had fallen in the engagement.

Voltaire passed three days with the King before his expedition into Silesia. It is said he was sent there as a spy from the court of Versailles; and that, as soon as he was certain of what was about to happen, he communicated the intelligence to the court of France.

This behaviour gave occasion to his enemies to say, that he had been received with coolness; but the King wrote some verses and letters to

him from the field of battle; and Voltaire, while he praised his ardour in the pursuit of military glory, always inculcated the doctrines of humanity and justice. At this time, the Cardinal de Fleury died. Voltaire had been a good deal connected with him, because he was desirous of learning the anecdotes of the reign of Louis XIV., which Fleury loved to relate. But the natural weakness of the cardinal, and the illiberality which hinders the intimacy of persons high in power, with those of superior abilities, but in different stations, prevailed over his vanity and taste. He had endeavoured to enslave the minds of the French, and to impede liberty of thought and expression; and he was alarmed by the boldness of the writings of Voltaire. He equally feared to have his quiet disturbed in defending him, or the small portion of fame he possessed destroyed in abandoning him, through timidity. The poet found him rather a concealed enemy, than a protector; and his attachment to be founded on the gratification of his own vanity. Voltaire aspired to the honour of succeeding him in the academy. He had, by the repre-

sensation of *Merope*, combated the system of Despréaux,

“De cette passion la plus sensible peinture
Est d’aller au cœur la route la plus sure.”

and asserted, that nature can produce on the stage, effects more pathetic and heart-breaking. At its representation, the pit, from the interests of the occurrences, and from a rapidity of dialogue hitherto unknown, and by the talents of an actress who gave the true force to the language, broke out into an universal cry of admiration, and compelled the author, who was concealed in a corner of the stage, to shew himself to the spectators. The young Duchess de Villars, intoxicated with pleasure and delight, yielded to the wishes of the people, and embraced Voltaire, when he entered her box. This was the first time an author had been called for by an audience; but what was then an homage rendered to genius, is now no more than a ridiculous ceremony, to which those who respect themselves, generally refuse submission. Mademoiselle Dumesnil, who acted the part of *Hermione*, kept the audience in tears through three successive acts, and the tide of

popular favour consoled him, in some measure, for the persecution he had sustained. Piron, who was his determined antagonist, combated every one of his tragedies with an epigram; and those with which he abused the best of Voltaire's works were generally the least worthy of notice. The lines he wrote after the representation of *Œdipus* were very bad; but those which followed *Merope* were still worse*.

Voltaire was opposed in his succession to the Cardinal's place, by Monsieur de Maurepas and Boyer, whom Fleuri had preferred to Massillon, as a tutor for the Dauphin. The King thought that it would have a ridiculous effect to replace the Cardinal by a person so opposite in opinion and character. Voltaire was, however, soon after persuaded by the minister to negotiate with the

* Chez l'historien Mérope usée,
Vers le pont neuf a pris l'essor,
Et là, par un sot, en rusée
S'est fait donner cent louis-d'or.
Sers la bien dans ton trésor,
Troupe ignorante et mercenaire,
Car elle fait pleurer encor,
Non le lecteur, mais le libraire.

King of Prussia; who, not finding it to his interest to continue the war with Austria any longer, had, on the conquest of Silesia, and the Province of Glatz, made peace with Maria Theresa. I have, said he, come to terms, and I advise every other claimant to do the same. This advice was good in proportion to the difficulty of its execution; and France would have been delighted, like the Prussian, to have been able to make so advantageous a peace after a long and unjust war. Their object was now to make Frederic break the treaty, which had been only just entered into, and again to take the field against the Austrians and the Imperialists.

CHAPTER V.

AS a pretence for undertaking these measures was requisite, Voltaire adopted that of his quarrel with Boyer, the old bishop of Mirepoix, and the King approved of the expedient. He wrote to Frederic, that unable any longer to bear the persecution of the Theatine monk, he was going to take refuge with a philosopher and a king, and far removed from the intrigues of a bigot. The prelate being in the habit of signing his name L'anc Evêq. de Mirepoix, and his writing being incorrect, the reading used to stand, L'âne de Mirepoix. This was the subject of much jesting in the correspondence; and never was any negotiation so lively on a subject so important. The King of Prussia, who never neglected any opportunity which occurred of ridiculing priestcraft and religion, answered with a torrent of jests on the ass of Mirepoix, and entreated his friend to lose no time in joining his court. Care was taken to cause the letters and answers to be

read openly ; of which the bishop being informed, he complained to Louis XV. that he was made to pass for a fool at a foreign court. The King replied that the jest was fair, and that he ought not to complain. This answer of Louis XV. was not in his usual style ; and, like some others I shall mention hereafter, has always appeared extraordinary ; but, by this means, Voltaire had, at the same time, the pleasure of revenging himself on the bishop, who had promoted his exclusion from the academy, of making a very agreeable journey, and of being able to serve the King and the state.

M. de Maurepas even took a great share in this adventure, because it put Mr. Amelot in his power, and because he was desirous of being made minister of foreign affairs. They were obliged to let Madame du Châtelet into the secret. She would not, at first, on any account, consent to the departure of her lover for the court of Prussia ; she thought nothing so base and so abominable in this world, as to quit a mistress for a monarch ; and she would have caused the most violent disturbance. In order to quiet her mind, it was agreed, that she should be concerned in the affair, and that the correspondence should pass through her

hands. Voltaire received all the money he wanted for his journey, on the single receipt of M. de Montmartel. He made a short stay in Holland, while the King of Prussia was engaged in reviewing his troops. While at the Hague, he lodged at the palace of the old court, which then belonged to the King of Prussia, in virtue of a treaty with the House of Orange. The young Count Podevils, who was beloved by the wife of one of the principal members of the state, used, by the influence of that lady, to obtain copies of all the secret resolutions of their Serene Highnesses, which were very unfavourable to the French interest. These were sent to the Court of Versailles, and this service was gratefully approved.

When Voltaire arrived at Berlin, he was received into the royal palace, as had been usual in his other visits. The King lived at Potzdam much in the same way as he always had lived, since his accession to the throne. This mode deserves a short detail. He used to rise at five in summer, and six in winter. If account is required of the regal ceremonies in use; which were the small and great entrances to his apartment; what were the functions of his chaplain, of his chamberlain, of his first gentleman

of the bed-chamber, &c., it is enough to say, that a single footman used to come and light the fire, and shave him, for he dressed himself almost without any assistance. His bed-room was splendid enough; a rich silver railing, embellished with small Cupids, very well carved, appeared to surround the alcove of a bed, of which the curtains alone were visible; but on looking further you found, instead of what might be expected, a cabinet library; and as to the bed itself, it was a folding one, with a bad single mattress, concealed by a screen. Marcus Aurelius and Julian, his two apostles, and the two greatest men of the Stoic persuasion, could not be worse accommodated. When his Majesty had finished dressing, he used to take something to eat; and call for his pages and coffee. The page to whom the handkerchief was thrown, used to remain a short time in private; but modesty must prevent the biographer from proceeding with the details of his more licentious chamberlain*.

This repast being finished, affairs of state succeeded. His first minister arrived by a small stair-case, with a large parcel of papers under his arm. This first minister was nothing more than a clerk who had been

* VOLTAIRE *Mémoires de sa Vie*.

in the house of Federsdoff, and had become a valet-de-chambre and favourite, as having formerly served the King while he was a prisoner in the castle of Custrin. The secretaries used to send all their despatches to the King's clerk, and he brought the extracts. The answer was placed on the margin in a few words. Thus were the affairs of a whole kingdom settled in the course of an hour. It was very seldom, that the state secretaries, or the ministers on duty, approached the King. There were some, indeed, to whom he had never spoken. The King his father had put the finances in such good order, and all was executed so much in the military way, and with so much implicit obedience, that a country of four hundred leagues was managed with as much ease as a small abbey. At eleven o'clock, the King, putting on his boots, used to review his regiment of guards, and, at the same hour, the colonels went through a similar parade in every province. In the interval between the parade and dinner, the general officers and one or two chamberlains used to eat at his table, which was as well furnished as possible, in a country where there is neither game, good meat, nor any poultry, and where they

are obliged to procure corn from Magdebourg. After dinner he used to retire to his cabinet, and make verses till five, or six, o'clock. After that a young man of the name of d'Arget, formerly the secretary of Valori, sent from France, used to read aloud. A sort of a concert followed; the King used to play on the flute extremely well. The music was often of his own composition, for he used to cultivate every art and accomplishment, and would not, like Epaminondas, have had the mortification of being obliged to own, that he did not know music. They used to sup in a small room; the most singular ornament in it was a picture, of which he had himself given the design to Pêne, his painter; one of the best colourists in Prussia. It was a most beautiful subject of Priapus, and the observer might there see every species of animal in libidinous postures, from men and women to monkeys and goats.

Never did any class of men speak so freely of all the superstitions of mankind, and never were they treated with so much ridicule and contempt. God alone was respected; but they did not spare any of those who had made use of his name to deceive their fellow-creatures. Women and priests never entered

the palace; in short, Frederic used to live without court, counsel, or worship. Some judges of a province had condemned a peasant, accused by a priest of an amour with his ass, to be burnt alive. It was the custom never to execute any one until the King had approved of the sentence; a very humane law, which is, to a certain degree, practised in England, as well as in some other countries. Frederic wrote at the end of the sentence, that he allowed throughout his dominions liberty of conscience and of love. A divine near Stettin, shocked at this indulgence, introduced in a sermon on *Herod* a few hints against Frederic, his master. The King ordered him to be brought to Potzdam, and cited him to the consistory, although there was no more of a consistory than masses. The poor man was brought; the King took the robe and the band of a preacher; d'Argens, the author of the *Lettres Juives*, and a Baron Polnitz, who had three, or four times changed his religion, were dressed in the same way; a dictionary of Bayle was put on the table, instead of a gospel book, and the accused was introduced by two grenadiers before these three ministers of God. "My brother," said the King to him, "in the name

of the Almighty, I ask you on what Herod you have been preaching?" He answered, "upon Herod, who ordered all the little children to be slaughtered." "I ask you," added the King, "whether it was Herod the first of that name, for you must know there have been several." The poor priest could not reply. "How, Sir," said the King, "dare you preach on Herod, and not know of what family he was? You are unworthy of the functions you discharge. We grant you pardon this time; but know, that we shall excommunicate you, if ever in future you dare to preach about a person with whom you are not acquainted." They then delivered his sentence, and granted his pardon. Three fictitious names were signed. "We proceed to-morrow to Berlin," added the King; we shall ask our brothers to grant your pardon. You must not fail attending." The priest went to Berlin to look for the three ministers; he was laughed at; and the King, who loved money even better than a jest, did not manifest any wish to pay the expenses of his journey.

Frederic used to govern the clergy as despotically as the other subjects of his kingdom. He exercised an unlimited power in granting divorces, when hus-

bands and wives did not agree together. A minister cited to him, one day, the ancient testament on these divorces. "Moses," he answered, "used to govern his Jews as he chose, and in the same way I shall manage my Prussians."

This singular government,—these manners still more strange,—this contrast of stoicism and epicurism,—of severity in the military discipline,—and of effeminacy in the interior of the palace,—the pages with whom he used to amuse himself in his cabinet, and soldiers passing the gauntlet six and thirty times under the windows of the King, who was looking on at the punishment,—discourses on morality, and an unruly licentiousness, composed a fantastical picture, with which few persons were acquainted at that time, and which has since been never beheld in Europe.

The strictest economy prevailed in all his pleasures. His table, and that of the officers and servants, were fixed at thirty-six crowns a-day, independent of wine. At other courts, the officers of the crown have the care of those expenses. At this time, his valet-de-chambre Federsdoff was at once his chief steward, his cup-bearer, and great bearer of the bread-basket.

Whether it was through economy, or through policy, he did not grant the least favour to his old favourites, and, above all, to those who had exposed their lives in his service, when he was Prince Royal. He did not pay the money which he had then borrowed: and, as Louis XII. did not revenge the injuries he had experienced when Duke of Orleans, the King of Prussia forgot the debts of the Prince Royal. The poor mistress, who had been whipped for him by the hand of the executioner, was married to the clerk of the hackney-coach office, for there were eighteen hackney-coaches in Berlin; and her former lover presented her with a yearly pension of seventy crowns, which was always paid with the greatest exactness. Her name was Shommers, a tall woman, very thin, with the look of a sibyl, who did not appear to be worth undergoing a flogging for a prince. Nevertheless, when at Berlin, Frederic displayed much sumptuousness on public days. It was a splendid sight to see him at table, surrounded by twenty princes of the empire, served on the finest gold plate in Europe, and thirty fine pages, and as many young edukes, richly dressed, bearing large dishes of solid gold. The great officers were then

seen; but, except at such times, they never appeared. After dinner, they used to go to the opera, in a large house, three hundred feet long, which one of his chamberlains, named Knoberstoff, built without the help of an architect. The best singers, and the best dancers, were in his pay. La Barbarani was then performing on his theatre. She afterwards married the son of his chancellor. The King had ordered this dancer to be taken away from Venice by some soldiers, and she was brought by way of Vienna up to Berlin. He was rather in love with her, because her legs resembled those of a man. A singular thing is, that he used to give her thirty-two thousand francs, as yearly wages. His Italian poet, who used to make verses for the operas, of which he formed the plan himself, had only twelve hundred francs a-year; but it is to be considered he was very ugly, and could not dance. La Barbarani had alone more than the emolument of three ministers of state together. As to the Italian poet, he one day paid himself. He stole from a chapel, used by the first King of Prussia, some old gold galoons, with which it was ornamented. The King, who never frequented a church, said, that he found himself no loser. Besides, he had just

been writing a dissertation in favour of thieving, which is printed in the collection of his academy ; and he did not think it proper, at this time, to belie his writings by his actions. This indulgence, however, was not extended towards the military. There was a gentleman of Franche Comté, in the prisons of Spandau, six feet high, whom the late King had enticed away on account of his tallness. They had promised him the place of chamberlain, and allotted him that of a common soldier. The poor man soon after deserted, with a few more of his comrades : he was seized, and brought before his Majesty, to whom he was either magnanimous, or simple, enough to observe, he only repented of one thing, which was not having killed such a tyrant. For this answer, his nose and his ears were cut off ; he was made to pass the gauntlet six-and-thirty times, and afterwards sent to Spandau to work on the public roads. He was working still when Mr. de Valori, the French envoy, begged Voltaire to ask his pardon from the very clement son of the very cruel Frederic William. His Majesty was pleased to say, that it was for him, *la Clemenza di Tito* was performed ; a beautiful opera, by the celebrated Metastasio, put into music

by the King himself, aided by the Italian. He took a good opportunity of recommending to his consideration the case of the poor Franche Comtois, without ears and without a nose, and composed the following appeal in his favour :

Génie universel, ame sensible et ferme,
Quoi ! lorsque vous réglez, il est des malheureux !
Aux tourmens d'un coupable il vous faut mettre un terme
Et n'en mettre jamais à vos soins généreux.
Voyez auprès de vous les prières tremblantes,
Filles du repentir, maîtresses des grands cœurs
S'étonner d'arroser de larmes impuissantes
Les mains qui de la terre ont du sécher les cœurs.
Ah ! pourquoi m'étaler, avec magnificence,
Ce spectacle brillant où triomphe Titus ?
Pour achever la fête, égalez sa clémence,
Et l'imitiez en tout, ou ne le vantez plus.

The request was strong ; but it had the advantage of being in verse. The King promised some lenity, and even some months after, he had the goodness to put the old gentleman into the hospital at six sous a day. He had refused that favour to the Queen his mother, who, very likely, had asked for it in prose.

In the midst of feasting, operas, and suppers, the secret negotiation proceeded. The King wished Voltaire to speak about every thing ; and he used sometimes to mingle questions on France and Austria

with the Eneid and Livy. The King used often, at last, to burst into a passion, saying, that as long as the French court sued for peace in all other quarters, he would not make war. Voltaire used to send to him from his own room into his apartment reflections on a piece of paper with a margin, on which he replied to the other's solicitations. The following was one of the correspondences. Do you doubt that the House of Austria will, on the first occasion, require the restoration of Silesia? His answer in the margin was :

Il^s seront reçus biribi
À la façon de Barbari mon ami.

This negotiation of a most novel kind finished by a discourse the King held with Voltaire, in a moment of anger against the King of England, his dear uncle. These two kings did not like each other. The King of Prussia used to say, George is the uncle of Frederic, but not of the King of Prussia. At last, he told his guest, "Let France declare war against England, and I march." The King yielded to these persuasions, imagining that he was consulting his own safety, and his own interest by so doing. The following month the Austrians had an hundred

thousand men opposed to them. Voltaire was pressed to stay near his friend in Prussia ; but having performed the mission to his own satisfaction, and that of Louis XV., he returned to Paris. The real object of his journey had been kept secret, and was attributed to his quarrel with Boyer. Piron accordingly, to perpetuate the memory of his supposed flight, made an epigram on the occasion, which, however, does not reflect much credit either on his heart, his head, or his literary reputation :

Du permesse noir étourneau,
 Aigle aux yeux du vulgaire ignace,
 Lâche ennemi du grand Rousseau,
 Fuis méchant, fuis, double le pas,
 Cours, vole au fond des pays Bas.
 Replonger ta muse infernale
 Loin pour jamais, loin de nos yeux,
 Avec ton squelette odieux,
 L'orgueil, l'envie et le scandale.

It must, nevertheless, be allowed, that, with the exception of the bitter dislike Piron felt towards Voltaire, he was a good-humoured man, had a constant flow of wit in conversation, and good spirits in company. His *Métromanie* is the best piece on the French stage, after those of Molière. On this occasion, fully

persuaded that Voltaire had fled, fearful of being imprisoned on account of his want of respect towards Boyer, he composed the lines which are quoted.

After having rendered this important service to his country, Voltaire performed one equally useful to the Republic of Letters, by the introduction at Paris of M. de Marmontel, a young student of the University of Toulouse, where he had justly deserved the prize of the Floral Games, although it had been awarded to another candidate; the academy of Toulouse not having been insensible to the influence of rank and wealth in determining the respective merits of the competitors—the common fault of all literary societies, from the universities of England and France, to the grammar-schools of Scotland and America. At Oxford and Cambridge, indeed, this is even now so much the case, that the name of a lord, on the boards of their college, is pointed out to every new resident as an example for wit, and of a person who studiously performs the duties of attending chapel-hours, and college-discipline.

The general character of the young nobility of England, in the present day, furnishes striking and satisfactory proofs of the benefits derived from their scholastic

education*. Marmontel appealed to a tribunal higher and more impartial than that of Toulouse, in the same manner as an enlightened Englishman would appeal from Oxford, or Cambridge, and sent his compositions to Voltaire; who, to console him for the injustice he had experienced, made him a present of his works, and invited him to the capital, to promote the cultivation of his talents. This was, no doubt, more highly flattering than even the acquisition would have been of the prize for which he had contended; but the young poet, fearful of exposing himself to the temptations of a capital, the expenses of which his finances would not support, at first refused; yet, afterwards, having an assurance of patronage and protection from

* In a French work, recently published at Paris, entitled, *Essai sur l'Emploi du Temps, ou Méthode qui a pour Objet de bien régler l'Emploi du Temps, premier moyen d'être heureux, dessiné spécialement à l'usage des jeunes gens de 15 à 25 ans, par un Membre de la Légion d'Honneur*, which really has some very excellent remarks, and which, if well read and attended to, would produce more good to mankind, and credit to society, than either *his* cross or *our* medals. He assigns, from Bacon, as reasons for the decline of the Sciences, the poverty of the professors, and their bad pay. Since the time, however, that Bacon flourished, a wonderful change has taken place in this respect in England; but without producing the other one anticipated by the philosopher.

Mr. Ory, the comptroller-general, who consented to supply him with what was necessary, and being reassured of the protection of Voltaire, he left Toulouse in company with some friends, and reached Montauban. It was here that he learned the academy of that town had adjudged him a lyre as the prize of his compositions. As, however, he did not conceive it had any of the good qualities of that of Apollo, he sold it, and, regaling his friends with the money, proceeded on his route to Paris. When he arrived there, he found that his friend, Mr. Ory, had just lost his situation; but Voltaire received him with open arms, and joined his consolation and advice to enable him to support this misfortune with courage; he advised him to write a comedy. "It would be like my drawing a likeness without having seen the original," replied the young poet. This remark pleased Voltaire. A young writer often says forcible things, but they are not always just; experience alone can give the power of expressing truth in a forcible manner. Voltaire introduced him to all his friends, and Marmontel was soon able to stand alone.

We now come to a period when the author of the *Henriade* exchanged the labours of a literary life for

those of a courtier ; and was no longer attached to the car of Minerva, but to the wheel of fortune. The love which Louis XV. had for Madame E'tiole* : (who was soon afterwards made La Marquise de Pompadour) had already been manifested. This lady was born in a low rank of life, and was the wife of a poor farmer of Normandy. Her father had been condemned to death as a deserter, and her mother, in order to save the life of her husband, sacrificed the honour of her daughter to the desires of the king ; who, struck with her extraordinary beauty as he was one day returning from hunting, had made some inquiries respecting her condition. The charms of her mind, and the symmetry of her body, enabled her to maintain an ascendancy over his conduct and his passions, for twenty years, even to the time of his death. Voltaire found at her house, at Etiole, a pleasant retreat, and, in her society, an agreeable friend ; and he here made a sketch of the history of the war, which was carried

* On whom the following epitaph was written at her death :

Ci git qui sortit du fumier ;
Qui pour faire fortune entière
Vendit son honneur fermier
Et sa fille au propriétaire.

on at that time, and in proportion as he finished his writings, they were deposited in the King's library.

About the end of the year, he repaired to the camp of Fribourg, where Louis XV. then was; and presented him with an epistle, of which his Majesty was at that time deserving. The King, by way of recompense, gave him the office of Historiographer of France, which was rather considered in the light of a sinecure for an indolent man of letters, than as an office requiring active duties.

The marriage of the dauphin with the Infanta of Spain had been postponed; but they were now making preparations for the reception of this young princess, and Voltaire was charged with the difficult task of composing a play, in celebration of the nuptials. Molière had done the same under Louis XIV., and the pieces he wrote on this occasion are not inferior to the rest of his works. *La Princesse de Navarre* was the entertainment produced by Voltaire, which procured him the appointment of Gentleman of the Bedchamber*.

The duties of his office did not suit a person who

* He wrote the following lines on the occasion:

Mon Henri IV. et ma Zaire
Et mon Americaine Alzire,

was so entirely devoted to letters and philosophy. The King, therefore, allowed him to sell the place, and to have its duties performed by deputy.

About this time Madame du Châtelet was obliged to go to Châlons, where her son had the small-pox; and Voltaire did not abandon his afflicted mistress. Their society was a mutual comfort; but, on his return, he was obliged to perform quarantine, for fear of communicating the infection to the court. "This," says he, "is not the only evil I have suffered from prejudice." During the time that Louis XV. was in Flanders, his chamberlain resided at Champ, about three leagues from Paris, in a house belonging to the Duke de la Valière, where he had an opportunity of consulting his valuable library, and prosecuting his studies. While resident there, he received a letter from the Marquis d'Argenson, announcing the victory of the French over the allied forces at the battle of Fontenoi. Many general officers sent the details of the engagement; and in two days the poem of that

Ne m'ont valu un seul regard du Roi,
J'eus beaucoup d'ennemis avec très-peu de gloire.
Les Honneurs et les biens pleuvent enfin sur moi
Pour une farce de la foire.

name was produced. Its principal merit consists in the minuteness of detail. The name of no officer of condition is omitted ; and in the course of a very few days no less than twenty thousand copies were distributed. After this poem, Voltaire was again required to produce a dramatic work on the same subject for the fêtes at Versailles. The *Temple of Glory*, after the style of Metastasio, was what he fixed upon. In this we see a moral and philosophical spirit, which is not to be found in any of the plays represented at the fêtes under Louis XIV. ; but what had met with success at Versailles was criticised at Paris. Piron, piqued by the favour shewn at court to a work which was not a master-piece, wrote an amusing satire upon it.

A revolution at this time threatened England. Prince Charles Edward, son of the Pretender, and grandson of the unfortunate James II., at the head of an armed force, asserted his right to the throne of his forefathers. He had landed in Scotland, possessed himself of Edinburgh, and gained three battles. Some English noblemen had joined his party, and many others only waited the event of a decisive engagement, to take up arms also. France, at war with England and astonished at the success of the

Prince, thought it advisable to second him. The Count de Lally, whom Louis had the year before made brigadier on the field of battle at Fontenoi, planned a descent upon England; it was communicated to Voltaire, who was charged with the office of writing the declaration, which was to be issued by the Duke de Richelieu, as commander in chief, upon his landing. But whilst these preparations were making in the French harbours, Charles Edward, hitherto successful in his undertaking, was totally routed at Culloden, by the Duke of Cumberland; who had commanded the British forces at Fontenoi the year before. A price was set on the life of the prince; and he had the alternative of wandering disguised from island to island, and from cavern to cavern, to the risk of forfeiting his head upon the scaffold. His countrymen beheld, with regret, gallantry and personal beauty in distress; and, though modern politics have belied, and scoffed at, the notion of the liberty a nation possesses in choosing its own monarch, the historian must sigh, when he balances the divine right of Kings with the power of a democratic constitution. The moral strikes more forcibly when prejudice is nearly extinguished, or the chance of danger averted,

and many an honest heart, concealed under an Highland plaid, still beats at the recollection of the struggles of their ancestors in the cause of the Pretender.

All the political dreams of the French vanished, and Voltaire was one of those who the least cared for their defeat. About this time the President Bouhier died; Voltaire demanded his place at the academy, but the voice of fanaticism again was raised against him. Boyer and his partisans affirmed, that to hold a place in the academy, did not require the member to possess abilities, but that it was indispensably requisite he should be a good Christian; and Mahomet, which has been the most durable of Voltaire's works, was the one which excited most the clamours of the bigots. Voltaire, to remove their objections, sent the tragedy to Benedict XIV., one of the most reasonable and enlightened of the pontiffs that have occupied the holy chair of Saint Peter, with a copy of verses and an address. The pope returned the poet a letter, and some medals of gold, for what he called the *Bellissima Tragedia*. Boyer's attempt was foiled; but he was not disarmed; and Voltaire was obliged to write a hypocritical letter to the head of the Jesuits, which as it condemned some of his enemies,

found favour for its author in the sight of this prelate, and his views were no longer opposed.

Voltaire's address to the academy was of a description as different from what had been hitherto delivered, as his character and talents were from those of its members. Instead of a string of compliments and panegyrics on those in power, he spoke of literature with taste and judgment, and mentioned Crébillon with the noble generosity of one who does not wish to detract from his rival; a behaviour which is rarely practised by any class of men; and still more rarely among authors. A fresh storm of libels was now poured upon him, and, unluckily, his patience and self-possession forsook him. He found that the place in the academy, for which he had sighed for the last fifteen years, added nothing to his glory; it had given him, perhaps, a momentary pleasure, but this was destroyed by many hours of uneasiness; neither the consolations of friendship, nor the pride of acknowledged abilities, could render him insensible to the attacks of his enemies; and, when we reflect on the uncertain enjoyment of those things for which we often sacrifice so much, and by which we acquire so little, human enthusiasm must

despond. The ambition of the conqueror will be confined within more narrow bounds, when he calculates how limited his enjoyment may prove of the kingdoms which he has panted to possess; the author, or philosopher will, perhaps, wish they had never written, and never speculated, when they compare their hours of labour with the harvest of eminence they have reaped, and the prayers of the saint or devotee will falter on their lips, when they contrast the present with the past, for they must fly to faith in the Redeemer, as an antidote to the daily disappointments of the world.

A minister, one day speaking to Voltaire on this subject, reproached him with too great irascibility, saying: "If I were in your situation, I would let them talk on and say nothing." The advice was good, but the philosophy of this same minister was not proof against a couplet which Voltaire made, on quitting him. A man's own conduct is never known until it is tried, and our poet lost a friend. The situation of a courtier did not become him; by degrees he broke the chains which attached him to Versailles, and gave the preference to Sceaux. This was the residence of the Duchess du Maine; fre-

quented by the best company, and free from the vexations and intrigues of preferment or pension-hunting. Those who were there admitted, were named, *Les Oiseaux de Sceaux*, in the same manner as those who frequented the society of Ninon de Lenclos, were called, *Les Oiseaux des Tournelles*. From this place he retreated to the court of Stanislas I., which did not in the least resemble that of Louis XIV. This monarch, in the cultivation of letters and philosophy, consoled himself for the loss of Poland, and had around him persons who were agreeable and well-informed.

Voltaire and the Marquise du Châtelet were invited; and they found that repose and quiet, which is absolutely necessary for the prosecution of literary acquirements. Here was written the play of *Nanine*, which was represented before the King; as also the romances of *Baboue* and *Zadig*. Few people, observes Duvernet, would at first sight perceive, that, in *Zadig* the character of Vebor was a satire on the Theatine monk, Boyer; and thus the philosopher revenged himself for six years of persecution, which had been occasioned by this prelate. It is to be regretted, that we have no more works in this style; for, in all the allegories of Voltaire, we see a phi-

losophic moral blended with amusement and instruction.

He had resided with Stanislas during two years, and had almost forgotten Versailles and his enemies, when the death of Madame du Châtelet, after an illness of two days, tore him from this retreat ; in his own words, " the family were so overcome with grief, as to be incapable either of sending for a priest, or a confessor." She died without feeling any of the horrors of death, and it was reserved for those around, to estimate her sufferings. They survived when she was no more. The inanimate form of an object, still beloved, was extended before the weeping eyes of those who had once beheld her with fondness, and heard her converse with pleasure : and reason gave no hopes against a calamity they knew to be irremediable. The passions, which had agitated and pleased others, by turns, existed now only in recollection ; the stillness of death struck forcibly on their minds, and the philosophers of Luneville retired with a practical example of the triumphs of nature over artificial resolution.

Occupation of mind, and the consolations of true religion, are boasted of as the strongest antidotes

to grief; but the speculations, or the experience, of the sage, as well as the resignation of the pious, are found useless and weak in calamity; and the bitterness of sorrow triumphs over human theories. The armour of scepticism, or credulity, may appear dazzling in a mock engagement; but their gaudy shield is soon pierced through by the spear of adversity; and the victim to his vanity finds, that what he recommended as a defence to others, is no protection to himself. Voltaire, unable to remain at a place rendered so dismal by his recollections, returned to the metropolis, and again sunk into severe study; a kind of relaxation from unhappiness, of which few can take advantage, or appreciate. It is said, that the coffin, which held the remains of Madame du Châtelet, broke down in passing over the stage of the theatre, on which she had acted only a few days before.

CHAPTER VI.

THE peace which was concluded this year, caused more gaiety than usual in Paris. Many of the nobility had theatres in their own houses; and the corporation of citizens united their efforts to establish them in different quarters of the town. Voltaire had one in the Rue Traversière, between the Palais Royal and the Tuilleries. Here he gave lessons to Le Kain, one of the best actors the French stage ever produced. He was the son of a goldsmith, and had profited by a good education; but his friends, fearful of his success as an actor, tried to turn his views from the stage, and to induce him to embrace the trade of his father. All their offers of advice and assistance were in vain. The young man persisted in affirming, that nature had destined him for a comedian; and when Voltaire perceived his resolution to be fixed, he interested himself in his behalf, and caused him to perform at Sceaux, before the Duchesse du Maine, where he was soon distinguished for his theatrical talents.

In 1749, *Orestes* was presented. An adverse party, at the head of which was Piron, wished to prevent its success. Hissing commenced before the curtain was raised; even in the street, and during the first four acts, nothing was heard but a confused noise of disapprobation and applause. In the fifth act, however, during a moment of approbation, Voltaire, leaning forward from his box, exclaimed, in a loud tone of voice, "Courage, brave Athenians, give your applauses; it is Sophocles quite pure." Three weeks after this his *Rome Preserved* appeared, in opposition to the *Catiline* of Crébillon; but it was acted in private. The Duke de Villars performed the part of Catiline, and Voltaire that of Cicero. "Never," says Condorcet, "was an illusion so complete; it was the character in which he excelled the most, and, indeed, the only one in which he appeared to advantage. He had passed a year in Paris, and enjoyed the gratification and pleasure arising from fortune and friends; but fate called him into Prussia; and Frederic, his old friend, pressed him to go and take up his abode in the palace of Potzdam. Voltaire, however, who dreaded the loss of liberty, and was well aware of the treachery of courts, pleaded bad health, and the unwhole-

someness of the climate of Berlin. D'Argens, La Metrie, and Algarotti, were charged by the King to reassure him on this subject of alarm, and d'Arget, the secretary of the King, joined with their letters a certificate in verse, which was accompanied by two melons, gathered in the month of June, in the royal gardens of Potzdam. This, however, did not quite relieve his anxiety; and Frederic wrote to him himself on the subject, and ordered his banker at Paris to advance him sixteen thousand francs for the expenses of his journey. Voltaire having thus all the pretences for a refusal removed, applied for a guarantee of safety for his niece, Madame Denis, by whom he wished to be accompanied; this was granted, and a slight mortification to his self-love at last decided his final movement.

Young Arnaud, who was then at Berlin, had addressed a letter, in bad verse, to the king of Prussia, to which his Majesty returned, in answer, a stanza, affirming that "Arnaud was in his dawn, and Voltaire in his decline*." These lines were sent to Thiriot, the literary correspondent of the King at

* Arnaud étoit à son aurore, et Voltaire à son couchant.

Paris, and from thence found their way to Voltaire, who was in bed when he received the letter.—“Arnaud in his dawn,” cried he, springing up in his nightgown; “Voltaire in his decline: let Frederic meddle with reigning, and not with criticising me. I will go: yes, I will go and teach that King, that I am not yet in my decline*.” Soon after this, he went to Compeigne, where the court then was, and obtained permission from Louis to go to Prussia; from Compeigne he proceeded into Holland, to Cleves, where Mr. Raesfeld, the commissary of the King of Prussia, had orders to receive, lodge, and forward him to Berlin. The King of France could not help feeling regret to see such a man retire from his court, to that of a rival prince; and, though a simple chamberlain, it did not diminish that sensation at the court of Versailles; for he was the first literary character of the age, and had been neglected by the court of his own country.

Perhaps a prince might have been received at the court of Prussia with more magnificence than Voltaire, but not with such real and enthusiastic pleasure;

* Que Frédéric se mêle de régner, et non de me juger; j'irai, oui, j'irai apprendre à ce roi que je ne me couche pas encore.

he had the finest apartments in the palace, lodged near the King, had a private table and establishment, and a secretary had orders to supply him with whatever could render his habits of life most agreeable. He was soon offered honours and distinctions ; but he could accept of none but by permission of the French King ; whom he considered his master. His letters written on this head to the court of Versailles, were received with bitter recollections of the loss they had sustained. He thought it, however, right to accept the key of chamberlain, and the Cross of Merit ; and the King, who decorated him with these marks of distinction, added some philosophical verses, and soon afterwards volunteered a contract, by which he was to pay him a yearly pension of twenty thousand francs.

This sort of contract, between a monarch and a philosopher, is not one of the least extraordinary events of the age in which it happened ; and there are few learned men of the present day who would not be chamberlains for a like sum. The gaiety of the court, since Voltaire's arrival, became livelier, and the tragedy of *Rome Preserved*, which had been hitherto only performed at the private theatre of the Duchess du Maine, was played at Potzdam by

the Princesses of the royal family. Darget relates, that, at the rehearsal of this play, the soldiers who acted the prætorian guards, and who, though well trained for the field, did not understand stage movements, excited the indignation of Voltaire, who, dressed as Cicero, exclaimed in a burst of passion, "Zounds, I asked for men, and they sent me Germans*." The Princesses were amused at the energy with which the Roman orator, who forgot that ladies were present, had expressed himself; an impetuosity of character which he preserved even to his 80th year.

Frederic and Voltaire had an interview every evening. They conversed on politics, arts, and the state of the human mind. The time passed quickly and agreeably away, till Maupertuis, the president of the academy at Berlin, came to court. He was a man of considerable talents, and pleasant in society where he had the ascendancy; but, if opposed, his disposition shewed itself in pride and gloomy abstraction; and in company with the King he was more like a slavish courtier, than a philosopher speaking his sentiments. In this, however, he might have been right;

* Foutre, j'ai demandé des hommes et on m'envoie des Allemands.

for the enjoyment of power renders the mind insensible to truth; and the subsequent pages will shew us how much this was the case even with Frederic. The suggestions of philosophy, or the criticisms of genius, are not always agreeable sounds to the ear; and it is the prerogative of kings to listen only to what is pleasant and entertaining. The influence of majesty, and the splendour of a crown, may, for a time, silence cotemporaneous animadversion; but it will exist and breathe in history, when the bones of the monarch are as rotten as the clothes he wore, and when he is only seen and remembered through his vices and deformities. Thus, the superiority of the works of intellect, over the more perishable ones of art, are a foretaste of immortality; indeed, the only one with which we are acquainted, or which we can connect with the endurance of time.

During ten years Maupertuis had been flattered by Voltaire; and when, in 1733, he wrote his *Essay upon the Figures of the Stars*, the philosopher of Cirey wrote to him thus: "I have read it with as much pleasure as a young Miss reads a romance, or a Devotee the Evangelist*." But while resident in Lorraine,

* Je l'ai lu avec autant de plaisir, qu'une jeune demoiselle lit un roman, et qu'un dévot lit l'Évangile.

Madame du Châtelet and Maupertuis had quarrelled, and Voltaire took the part of his friend ; thus all efforts to reconcile the philosophers at Potzdam failed. Voltaire having been ordered by the King to select for him a public lecturer, recommended the Abbé de Prades. This is the same Abbé, who, being desirous of taking the title of doctor in theology, maintained, with the greatest intrepidity, at a full meeting in the Sorbonne, at Paris, the following doctrines : “ That our soul is nothing more than an igneous fluid, after the opinion of the old fathers ; that Moses is the most impudent of all historians, after some more learned men ; and, lastly, that the miracles of Jesus Christ resembled those of Esculapius upon his own authority. This boldness in the promulgation of what were judged to be such detestable principles, gained the Abbé a great reputation over all Europe, and a small fortune at Berlin. Frederic made him a prebendary, as well as a lecturer. The pious lamented, and the wicked laughed at bad works producing such good fruit, but the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and not to be measured by human rules, or laws.

The monarch of Prussia, and the chamberlain from

Versailles, however, much as they might admire each other's character, were destined never to agree. The first cause of discontent between them was, as du Thié-
bault* asserts, too great a regard for economy. It is well known, that Voltaire was at that time very careful; but this had always been habitual with Frederic. Voltaire imposed upon himself a singular mode of living in this respect, which had never been practised before. Born with a tolerably good fortune, which was increased by inheritance and other means, he had constantly been frugal ever since his youth, and continued, for fifty years, to augment his income as much as possible: by this means, from twenty thousand francs a-year, (nearly a thousand pounds sterling,) he amassed a fortune of more than a hundred thousand; and it was only when in an advanced age, that he began to live in a handsome manner. This point, however, he had not yet attained; and, in consequence, he was following the first part of his plan, when he came to Berlin. In the agreement made by him with the King of Prussia, besides the key of chamberlain, and the cross of merit, he stipulated for the usual allowance of a minister of state, that is

* Séjour auprès de Frédéric.

to say, nearly twenty thousand francs a-year, besides a lodging in the palace, a seat at the King's table, fuel, and two wax candles a-day; and he was allowed, every month, so many pounds of sugar, tea, coffee, and chocolate; articles which the gentlemen of the bed-chamber valued at as much more. But it so happened that, either by design, or accident, they were in the habit of giving Voltaire sugar badly refined, spoiled tea, bad coffee, and ill-made chocolate. He suspected, perhaps, that this was done by Frederic's own orders; and whether it was that he wanted to know the truth, or correct the abuse, he complained of such bad treatment. Whatever orders the King might have given, no alteration took place; and Voltaire, more indignant than ever, did not fail to repeat his cause of grievance. "Come, my dear friend," said the King, "you can do very well without those trifling provisions, they cause you too much anxiety. I shall give orders that they may be suppressed in future." This conclusion astonished Voltaire. It seems, thought he, they follow the maxim of "let each gain or save as he can*;" the worst case on these occasions is to be made the dupe.

* Sauve ou gagne qui peut.

He accordingly began to sell the twelve pounds of wax-candles he received monthly ; and in order to have a light in his apartment, he took care, every evening, to go several times to his rooms under different pretences, and to take each time one of the largest wax-candles from the King's apartments ; which he did not bring back, and which he might have called, with very good reason, the substitutes for his sugar and coffee. These circumstances could not fail to produce a dislike between the parties. During the same time also, that the Monarch and his chamberlain were making verses, Voltaire, the King, and d'Arnaud, were hard at their compositions ; but, is it possible to speak of poetry and plays without mentioning love ? At the second visit of Voltaire to the King of Prussia, the Princess Ulrique, (some say the Princess Amelia,) one day asked him to make her a declaration of love, in which the word " amour " should not appear ; and the poet immediately repeated, as if by inspiration, the famous lines so often quoted*.

* Souvent un peu de vérité,
Se mêle au plus grossier mensonge :
Cette nuit dans l'erreur d'un songe
Au rang des rois j'étois monté.
Je vous aimais, Princesse, et j'osais vous le dire ;
Les dieux, à mon réveil, ne m'ont point tout ôté,
Je n'ai perdu que mon empire.

The beauty of these verses did not, however, make up for their bad fortune in many other respects. In the first place, Frederic thought it extremely impudent in any person to make a declaration of love to one of his sisters; and he did not think it right to suffer it even from Voltaire. He accordingly replied to the madrigal by an epigram, in which he shewed more spite than talent, and said, that "one may easily conceive a dog wishing to take the moon between his teeth, but that a scoundrel of a Frenchman should wish to make love to a great Princess, is an extravagance which exceeded all example." It was also discovered, that the madrigal intended for the Princess, was nothing else but an imitation of one in Italian, and this he took care to mention at the same time. Indeed, the eldest son of the academician Mr. de Francheville, a very young man, who had several times been employed as secretary about the person of the author of the *Henriade*, took notice, that after having, that very same day, written a few lines upon a piece of paper, he had read them over several times before he went to court, and had then torn the paper in pieces; so that the young copyist, thinking there was some important secret,

and being naturally curious and inquisitive, picked up all the scraps, and spent the evening in putting them together; and it was thus proved, that the verses, which the poet had passed off as an impromptu, had been deliberately composed. We also know, that Voltaire was occupied in correcting the King's verses; that he found the task very tedious; and, indeed, there still exist, most unluckily, a great number, which he has not corrected, in the works of the philosopher of Sans Souci. This, no doubt, caused more grievances, and some other disputes took place at the same time.

The long war which existed between Voltaire and La Beaumelle*, which lasted till their death, and which contributed to these dissensions, was caused by an information of Maupertuis. La Beau-

* La Beaumelle was a young man, who came from Denmark with the desire of being presented to the King of Prussia as a man of letters. He addressed himself to Voltaire, and sent him a small pamphlet which had made some noise at Paris, and was entituled *Mes Pensées*; among other ideas of his own were the following:

“Voltaire is not one of our greatest poets, but he is the one who is best recompensed.”

“The King of Prussia has wits around him like the princes of Germany, who have monkeys in their palaces.”

These ideas were read at supper to the King; the author was laughed at, and the blame laid to Voltaire by Maupertuis.

melle was on his road from Copenhagen; he had scarcely arrived at Potzdam, when Maupertuis persuaded him, that Voltaire was his enemy, and that he was accusing him of having harboured thoughts that were inimical to the King and his society. Voltaire and La Beaumelle were both in the wrong to pay any attention to the tiresome discourses of Maupertuis, which they ought only to have despised. La Beaumelle did, indeed, privately think that Voltaire's pleasantry and vivacity were excusable. In fact, not much attention was paid to that quarrel, because Frederic sent word to La Beaumelle that he was no longer in want of his services.

We now come to the quarrel with Maupertuis. It ought to be observed, there were so many disagreements between himself and Voltaire, that at last they came to an open rupture. What appeared to be the cause of their first misunderstanding, was an observation from the president, trifling in itself, but to which Voltaire made a harsh reply. They were both coming back from Sans Souci to Potzdam, about half-past one in the morning, in one of the King's carriages, when Maupertuis exclaimed ironically: "It must be confessed, that we spent a

charming evening." " I never spent a more stupid one," replied Voltaire. To appreciate well the observation and the answer, we must recollect, first, that Voltaire enjoyed so lively a mind, and so great a character for wit, that he in general used to crush all retort in other guests. Frederic alone was able to engage with him with any success ; but that extraordinary man was, on some occasions, either through indisposition, or other causes, extremely silent, cold, and torpid. Maupertuis, who, on the contrary, had much less wit than Voltaire, was equally facetious every day, and even sufficiently so to be amusing, when the other was not present. At the supper, from which they were coming on the day specified, Voltaire had been in a melancholy fit, and Maupertuis had shone ; which shews that the remark made was only a childish boast, that Voltaire might have taken for a sarcasm or an affront. This, however, is certain, that, after that day, they never spoke ; nor even came near each other. The King, who so readily indulged himself in these trifles, and who was so often amused by those of Voltaire against Maupertuis, not wishing that things should proceed to an open rupture, attempted several times to

reconcile them, but never obtained more than a pretended friendship, or rather a rancorous silence

Thus were their spirits disposed, when Frederic was told, that Voltaire had, under the title of *Le Docteur Akakia*, written a most severe satire against Maupertuis, which he was about to send to the press. The author was invited, in a very polite note, to the palace; and the moment he arrived, his Majesty told him, in a very friendly manner,—“ They say you have written a satire against Maupertuis, which is as witty as it is malicious: I am going to speak to you on that subject with freedom, and as, I think, I ought to speak to a friend. It is not my intention to argue, that Maupertuis has not done you any injury, or that you have not caused him any. I agree, on the contrary, that you both have a right to complain; and, in short, I feel and acquiesce in the opinion, that you are in the right to complain, and I should deliver him up to you without difficulty, if I were to take his case only into consideration; but I beg you will observe, that I have called that man into my service; that I have placed him at the head of my academy; that I have granted to him the same treatment as to my ministers of state; that I have admitted him into my

most familiar society ; and that I have permitted him to marry one of the ladies of honour of the queen, the daughter of one of my ministers, a Lady de Bredow, belonging to one of the most ancient and most considerable families of my kingdom. I have done so much for him, to the knowledge of all Europe, that I cannot consent to his being held up to ridicule without being compromised myself. If you cover him with disgrace, I shall certainly be ridiculed ; and if I suffer that I cause a real scandal : I shall be blamed for it, and all the nobility of this country will experience a mortification, which will be imputed to my forbearance. I beg you will consider these circumstances, and see what I can expect from your friendship, and what you owe to mine, and to reason. I know what it costs an author to sacrifice one of his works ; above all, when it is filled with happy ideas, and when the details are as agreeable as they are ingenious ; but who ought to care less than yourself for a sacrifice of this sort ? A thing which would be irreparable for any other person, is nothing to Voltaire ; a man who, above all others, in the world, has the most fruitful and the finest genius. You are so rich, both in ideas and talents. Your glory is

established by so many more important productions ! And what do you want besides, but the wish to make as many more worthy of yourself ? You must not doubt, nevertheless, that, in sacrificing the work in question, you will give me a proof of friendship, which, according to the circumstances, I shall so much the more appreciate. I do not hesitate in telling you, that you will render me one of the greatest services. Depend upon it, I shall never forget it. You may, on your side, expect every thing from my friendship." " Well," answered Voltaire, " I will bring the manuscript of my *Doctor Akakia*, and place it in the hands, and at the disposal, of your Majesty. I have always been too much devoted to your Majesty, not to sacrifice, to the assurance of your kindness, that little revenge, which had appeared to me just, moderate, and consequently innocent. I should certainly make greater sacrifices, if they were required from me by your wishes." " Lose no time," said the King, " I shall wait for you ; such noble designs must not be postponed." Voltaire went out, and came back immediately with his manuscript in his hand. " Sire," he exclaimed smiling, " here is the innocent going to perish for the people ! I put it

into your hands, order its condemnation." "Ah, my friend, what fate is mine! to order a punishment for that which deserves to be crowned with glory. Well! let us submit to fate with dignity; let us be as just as possible; let us revenge the victim by its sacrifice. Read; I shall save what I can, and it will be a precious remainder which my memory will keep with care; read, and may the pages devoured by the flames claim my just admiration. O Vulcan! never was a more memorable thing done, or a greater tribute paid to your honour." Voltaire read the whole satire; he was every moment interrupted by the applauses of the monarch, who found all the attacks as lively as they were well-applied; they were bursting into roars of laughter, and as they were going to throw it into the fire, the lamentations again burst forth: "Come, my friend, cheer up, since it is necessary, O Vulcan, cruel and devouring god, receive thy prey!" and while the book was burning, they performed fantastic dances round the fire. It was in this way the *Doctor Akakia* was read to the end, and burnt.

Never, perhaps, has so ludicrous a scene occurred between two such men. Certainly, if they had still had the same sentiments, which they had manifested for

merly. Frederic would have indemnified Voltaire for a sacrifice so great; and the latter would have persisted in the act of devotion to which he appeared to submit; nothing, however, except their former language was remaining; the sentiments which that language expressed had decayed. Frederic either feared the victory he had gained was pretended, and regarded, with distrust, the person who owned himself vanquished; or Voltaire could not confide any longer in a friendship, which had been used as the means of making him consent to such a sacrifice. He looked upon Frederic on this occasion, as on many others, to be an artful performer, who, exhibiting himself on the stage, turned every project to his own advantage. Voltaire also considered himself as one who had been duped; he observed the surly look of Maupertuis, who, on being assured of such high protection, shewed still more pride and arrogance; and concluded that he was imposed upon. This was a dreadful idea to one of his character; so that, soon after, he pondered upon nothing but how to evade the promises which had been extracted from him by force, and to return to his original plan.

As he had still a copy of *Doctor Akakia* remaining, he lost no time in getting it printed. Frederic, who had never allowed the transaction to escape his attention, discovered what was doing; waited till the edition was finished, and ordered it to be seized. Voltaire, who, on his part, guessed what Frederic intended, had taken care to procure clandestinely four copies of each sheet as they came from the press, and sent them into Holland. Frederic, irritated at Voltaire, for not having kept his word, and for wishing to deceive him in his own kingdom, ordered the edition to be burnt by the public executioner on a Sunday, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, in the middle of the market-place at Berlin, called "La place des Gensdarmes." Voltaire, upon seeing the ceremony from the house of his friend, Mr. de Francheville, who resided in the neighbourhood, and to whom he used to repair when he wanted relaxation from his attendance on the King, cried out with all his power:—"Oh! see the wit of Maupertuis, which is smoking in the air! what a dark and thick smoke! what a deal of lost wood! and those four little deserters who are going, by the post, to take refuge in Holland!" In this affair, Voltaire was on the laughing side; it must

also be allowed that, Frederic, who never ordered any other work to be burnt by the hand of the executioner, had to repent of having given these orders ; he gained nothing by it, but an everlasting obstacle to reconciliation with his chamberlain. We may now regard the two as irreconcilable enemies ; no mask could be worn ; no more flattering expressions could be used, nor promises made ; the offence was too great, the scandal was both public and irreparable.

On several previous occasions, Voltaire, after quarrels much less important, had not been able to restrain his feelings. He was told by La Métrie, that the King one day observed, that he “ wanted him still ; but, after sucking the orange, he would throw away the skin.” It is easy to imagine the effect this report produced. As Voltaire was one day shewing the verses of the monarch, he said, “ that man is much the same as the Abbé Cotin.” On another occasion he replied to a person who was speaking of the King : “ Le Roi ! ” you should say, “ Le Maréchal de logis ; ” and again having read, with indignation, the words *au château*, seizing a pen, he struck them out, and substituted these words, which he repeated several times :

Au corps de garde. He also complained to several persons of the dislike he had to correcting the verses of his Majesty ; and he had used an expression still more offensive than the complaint itself, saying, " he was doing nothing but washing the dirty linen of the King." All these discourses were of a nature to hurt the feelings of Frederic. Strong reasons, however, prevented their quarrelling publicly, on account of the scandal it would cause in all the courts of Europe. But this last injury regarding the *Akakia*, overturned every thing ; and nothing was now left, but to part as advantageously as possible. Frederic wished it to be done with moderation and dignity, and Voltaire was desirous of shewing himself firm, proud and independent. With these first ideas, Voltaire never appeared at court, unless he was invited ; and then he shewed, in his behaviour, pride and anger. They visited each other seldom, or never ; notes were exchanged full of upbraidings ; and sometimes they could not find words strong enough to express their sentiments. It appeared that, seeing the extremity to which they were reduced, neither wished to yield. It was in one of these moments, and after a violent quarrel, that Frederic sent, by his first

page of the bedchamber, to Voltaire, who lodged under his apartment, that is to say, on the first-floor, a note, full of bitterness, and which ended with this phrase, "Your heart is a hundred times more hideous than your wit is beautiful." It may easily be imagined, in what a passion this note put the subject of whom it treated. It was not forgotten by those present, even more than twelve years after it happened. There were no odious epithets which were not used towards the King, and Voltaire overwhelmed him with reproaches, walking from one end to the other of his room, with symptoms of the greatest agitation. The poor page, who was waiting to know whether he was to have any answer, listened to him, pale and trembling, and repeating, "Sir! sir!" At last the boy, who was only fifteen or sixteen years old, approached and said, "Sir, remember he is a King, that you are in his house, and I myself, who hear you, am in his service." Voltaire was thunderstruck by these words, and they produced the desired effect. He immediately took the page by the arm, and repeated, "Well, Sir, I shall take you for judge between us. Reflect, and tell me whether he has not used

me ill? I have committed but one fault, but it is an irreparable one; that is, having taught him to make verses better than myself. You may go, and give him this answer."

The page returned into the King's apartments, who was not much more at his ease than his chamberlain, waiting for the reply in his cabinet. "Have you given my note?" said the King to the page, as soon as he saw him. "Yes, Sire." "Have you delivered it to Voltaire himself?" "Yes, Sire." "Has he read it before you?" "Yes, Sire."—"What did he do with it after he read it, and what did he say?" Here the page, afraid to answer, hesitated. "I ask you what Voltaire said after reading my note?" The page still did not answer. "Don't you hear me? I insist upon your telling me what he said, and what he did." At last the page, still more terrified than he had been in the presence of Voltaire, began, pausing at every word, to tell him what had passed. The violence of the King increased as the page proceeded, and his rage was extreme, till he came to the last words of Voltaire. The monarch then became quite calm, smiled ironically, and terminated this great affair by saying, "He is a mad-

man." Thus Voltaire, by an undeserved compliment, had the skill to repair all the abuse he had uttered, to calm the King, and to save himself.

The treatment of the *Akakia*, however, appeared an inexcusable outrage between men of letters ; for Frederic had till this time behaved as a fellow-philosopher, and not as a despotic master. Ten days after this scene had taken place, Voltaire wrote to Berlin, to tell the King, that he was inconsolable for having displeased him, and that, persuaded he was unworthy of the marks of distinction with which he had been honoured, he took the liberty of depositing them at his feet. He added to this letter the cross of merit and his other orders, made a parcel of them, which he sealed, and wrote on it these four verses :

Je les reçus avec tendresse,
Je vous les rends avec douleur,
C'est ainsi qu'un amant, dans son extrême ardeur,
Rend le portrait de sa Maîtresse.

Young Francheville was charged to take this parcel to the palace, and to inquire for Mr. Fredersdoff, to whom Voltaire had at the same time written a note, desiring him to deliver them himself into the hands of the King. This Fredersdoff was his steward,

and had the management of all his affairs. The very same day, in the afternoon, a hackney-coach stopped before the apartments of Voltaire. It contained Fredersdoff, who was sent by the King, to return to the owner the cross of merit, and the key of chamberlain, with a dose of quinquina to cure his spleen. After a long interview with the messenger they were at last received by the philosopher.

Soon after, Voltaire had an illness, occasioned by too much assiduity to study, and by the different vexations he had experienced. The King sent him a permission to visit Plombières, and drink the mineral waters, but desired to see him before his journey. Without losing a moment his trunks were packed, and every thing prepared for quitting Prussia. He departed from Berlin, and arrived at Potzdam at seven in the evening; occupying the same apartment in the palace he had done before; but on this occasion he did not make so long a stay in the famous residence of Frederic. He left his papers and baggage packed up. On the 19th, after dinner, he went to see the King in his cabinet. Their interview lasted two hours. It was two months since they had seen each other. Voltaire, after the conference, which must have been very interest-

ing between two such great men, appeared so satisfied, that it was easy to perceive peace had been concluded. Indeed, he told his secretary, Collini, that Frederic had restored him to his friendship, and that Maupertuis himself had been turned into ridicule, in order to facilitate their reconciliation. Voltaire remained six days at Potzdam, during which time he supped every night with Frederic. These entertainments he called the Suppers of Damocles. Frederic was to set off on the 20th to review his troops in Silesia. Voltaire had some arrangements to make before his departure. They spent together part of the night from the 23d to the 24th. The poet went early in the morning to take leave of the King. Frederic made him give his word he would come back as soon as he had made use of the waters of Plombières. He then immediately, with Collini, got into his travelling carriage, and took the road for Leipzig. Such was the termination of the residence of Voltaire in Prussia; a country, in which he had taken refuge, expecting to find repose, and a shelter against persecution and intolerance; instead of which he found enemies still more violent than those who had tormented him in France, even among men who were following the same career. The

fabric of a youthful friendship with his protector had disappeared, as if it never had existed; sentiments of esteem and respect had been annihilated by petty provocations and trifling jealousies; and the philosopher left the court of the monarch with the conviction, that no attachment can ever be of long duration where power is enabled to enforce what kindness ought alone to dictate.

CHAPTER VII.

THE society of the sages at the court of Prussia was soon after this dissolved. D'Arget, who was a sensible man, and had observed the storm about to break, retired with the benefits and regrets of his master, both of which he well deserved. La Beaumelle, after having been some time in prison for an affair of gallantry, set off for Germany, where he had another awkward adventure with a chamber-maid who had robbed her mistress. The Abbé de Prades was confined on suspicion of treason. D'Arnaud could not determine under whose colours to enlist; gratitude disposed him towards Maupertuis, and inclination to his antagonist. Being an object of suspicion, therefore, to both parties, he was sent back to France, and one great man more was added to that country. Maupertuis languished for some time, broken-hearted by ridicule, neither valued nor despised

by his master ; and he is now only recollected as the adversary of Voltaire. La Metrie, the Atheist, died from having eaten too much of an indigestible pie stuffed with truffles, at the table of the English ambassador. His last moments were spent in denying God, and cursing some physicians whom he had lampooned at Paris. Frederic wrote his apotheosis.

The booksellers of Germany and Holland, thinking that the *Akakia* was the cause of the disgrace of Voltaire, and that a work which had had the honour of immolation would sell largely, lost no time in getting it printed ; there were ten presses at work, and an immense number of copies circulated. Maupertuis, thinking Voltaire remained at Leipzig in order to insult him nearer and with more advantage, and listening only to his rage, wrote his antagonist the well-known and foolish letter, in which he threatened him with vengeance and the most heavy punishment, in the language of a weak man, in a violent passion*.

* Je vous déclare que ma santé est assez bonne, pour vous aller trouver partout où vous serez, pour tirer de vous la vengeance la plus complète. Rendez grace au respect & à l'obéissance qui ont jusqu'ici retenu mon bras.

Voltaire replied to this philosophic rhodomontade, so unworthy of the president of an academy, in a letter full of jests, the style of which was applied to the geometrical ideas of Maupertuis*. To this letter he joined an advertisement, which appeared in the public papers†. Maupertuis, disconcerted, renounced the ridiculous project of challenging a man whom menaces did not seem to terrify; he therefore fixed his revenge on a plan which had fortunately all the success he anticipated.

From Leipzig, Voltaire and Collini proceeded to Gotha, and stopped at the Inn des Hallesbarden. Their Serene Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Saxe Gotha, immediately upon hearing he was in their town, invited him to their palace. This he accepted, and found good so-

* It ended as follows : Au reste, je suis encore bien faible, vous me trouverez au lit, et je ne pourrai que vous jeter à la tête ma seringue et mon pôt de chambre ; mais dès que j'aurai un peu de force, je ferai charger mes pistolets *cum pulvere pyrio* et en multipliant la masse par le carré de la vitesse jusqu' à ce que l'action et vous soient réduits à zéro, je vous mettrai du plomb dans la cervelle, elle parait en avoir besoin. Adieu, mon cher President. (Signé) VOLTAIRE.

† It was thus conceived : Un quidam ayant écrit une lettre à un habitant de Leipzig, par laquelle il menace le dit habitant de

ciety, attention, and consolation. The princess, in particular, always treated him with the greatest civility; her taste and her wit rendered her one of the most amiable women of the time. Voltaire had desired to repay so much kindness; and, as she was desirous of having an abridged history of Germany, he began it in the centre of the ducal library. He applied himself, with much assiduity, during the three and thirty days he remained at Gotha, to gather materials. Thus the republic of letters is indebted to a woman for *Les Annales de l'Empire*; the most laborious and most methodical work which was ever undertaken by the author.

l'assassiner, et les assassinats étant visiblement contraires aux privilèges de la foire, on prie tous et chacun de donner connaissance du dit quidam, quand il se présentera aux portes de Leipzig. C'est un philosophe qui marche en raison de l'air distrait, et de l'air précipité, l'œil rond et petit, la perruque de même, portant toujours le scalpel en poche pour disséquer les gens de haute taille. Ceux qui en donneront connaissance auront mille ducats assignés sur les fonds de la ville latine que le dit quidam fait bâtir, ou sur la première comète d'or ou de diamant qui doit nécessairement tomber sur la terre, selon la prédiction du dit quidam.

“*Vie Polémique de Voltaire et de ses Proscriptions.*”

The poem of *Natural Religion*, composed the preceding year at Potzdam, and which had been dedicated to Frederic, was presented to the Duchess, together with the beautiful verses which form its preface. This poem, printed under several titles, never had any by the consent of Voltaire, but that of *Natural Religion*. He left Gotha the 15th of May, 1753, directing his course towards Strasburgh, by Frankfort on the Main.

In the evening of the 26th he arrived at Cassel. The Landgrave was then at Wabern; he desired to see the celebrated traveller, who was immediately sent for by the hereditary prince. Few could resist so many marks of esteem from one of the most celebrated princes of Europe. Voltaire went the day after at twelve o'clock to Wabern, where he passed two days in conference with William VIII. and the hereditary prince, to whom he gave the name of the just and benevolent Landgrave of Hesse. The day after his arrival at Cassel, the innkeeper told him, that the Baron de Pollnitz was also in the town, and he met him the same day. Voltaire, who did not like him, only said a few words in passing; but the presence of the Baron,

who some time before was at Berlin and at Potsdam, induced him to make the observation of: "What is Pollnitz doing at Cassel?" which augured some future mischief.

It may be interesting to describe the mode of travelling adopted by Voltaire. He had his own carriage, a kind of calèche, very convenient, and well hung; there were two trunks behind, and cloak-bags on the front. On the seat were placed two servants; one from Potsdam, who was employed as a copyist. Four post-horses, sometimes six, according to the nature of the roads, drew the carriage. These particulars are in themselves of little importance; but they make the reader acquainted with minute details respecting a literary man who had succeeded in gaining a fortune equal to his reputation. Voltaire and Colini were seated in the inside of the carriage, with two or three portfolios containing manuscripts, to which he attached much importance; and a case, in which his gold, his letters of exchange, and his most valuable effects, were secured. In this style they travelled through Germany.

They left Wabern the 30th of May, in the morning,

and arrived at Marbourg in the evening. The day after, they had scarcely proceeded a league, when Voltaire ordered the postillion to stop. He was in the habit of taking snuff, and could not find, either in his pockets, or in the carriage, the gold snuff-box to which he used to have recourse. A consultation was held, and Collini returned as fast as he could, on foot, to the inn where they had slept. He arrived there out of breath, and went up, without being seen, into Voltaire's room. It was open; he could see nothing, either on the table, or the bed. There was, however, a table near the bed, part of which was covered with the curtain; he raised it, and perceived the snuff-box, he immediately took it, ran out of the house, and rejoined the carriage, as joyful as Jason after his seizure of the golden fleece.

This was one of those valuable presents which the poet often received from princes, as a mark of their esteem; and on that account it was still more estimable. They continued their journey, after having passed through Giessen, Butzbach, and Friedberg, the salt-works of which they visited. They arrived at Francfort on the Maine, about eight

in the afternoon. As he was going to set off the next day, a man of the name of Freytag, resident of the King of Prussia, escorted by a police-officer, and another ill-looking fellow, presented themselves. This, of course, much surprised Voltaire. The resident approached him, saying, in bad French, he had received an order to demand from him the cross of merit, the key of chamberlain, the letters, or any other papers, of Frederic's hand-writing, and the work of poetry of the King his master. Voltaire immediately gave up the cross and the key. He afterwards opened his trunks and portfolios, and told them, they might choose all the papers of the King's hand-writing, but as to the work of poetry, he had left it at Leipzig, in a box directed to Strasbourg; but that he was going to write directly to order it to be sent to Francfort; and that he should remain in the town till it arrived. This arrangement was accepted, and signed by both parties. Freytag wrote it as follows: "*Monsir, sitôt le gros ballot de Leipzig sera ici, où est l'œuvre de Poeshie, du Roi mon maître, et l'œuvre de Poeshie rendu à moi, vous pourrez partir où vous*

paraîtra bon. A Francfort, 1er. Juin, 1753. Freytag, resident du Roi, mon maître." Voltaire wrote at the end of it, "*Bon pour l'œuvre de Poésie du Roi votre maître."*

After this assurance from the resident, Voltaire determined on staying until the arrival of the box, and made Madame Denis, who was expecting him at Strasbourg, acquainted with this disappointment; and, without any uneasiness regarding the future, as without resentment for the past, he continued to labour at the *Annales de l'Empire*. Madame Denis, when she received the letter, came to Francfort, without losing a moment. The box, enclosing the *œuvre de Poésie*, arrived the 17th of June, and was the very same day taken to Freytag. Collini went the morning after, to be present at the opening of the box, and to let him know that, according to the agreement he had signed, Voltaire intended setting off in the course of three hours; he answered him rudely, saying, he was at that time engaged, but would do it in the afternoon. Collini returned at the hour appointed, and was told, the King had sent orders,

enjoining affairs to remain in their present state. Almost totally discouraged, he told Voltaire of what had happened, who went directly to see the resident, and insisted upon examining the orders of the King. Freytag hesitated,—refused, and uttered a torrent of abuse. Voltaire irritated, and fearing events more troublesome, and thinking himself at liberty in making use of the writing of the resident, took the resolution of departing secretly. He intended leaving the box in the hands of Freytag. Madame Denis was to remain, to see the end of this disagreeable and singular business. Voltaire and Collini were to escape, taking only a few cloak-bags, the manuscripts, and the money enclosed in the case. They accordingly hired a coach, and prepared every thing for their departure, which resembled the flight of a couple of robbers.

At the hour agreed, they selected a moment for leaving the inn, without being perceived; a servant followed with two portfolios and the case; and they entertained hopes of being delivered from Freytag and his agents. They had scarcely arrived at the gate of the town, which leads to

Mayence, when the coach was stopped, and intimation was immediately sent to the resident of their attempt at escape. Voltaire sent his servant to Madame Denis. Freytag soon appeared in a carriage, escorted by soldiers, and ordered them to get into it, with imprecations and invectives. Forgetting he was the representative of the King his master, he mounted with them and another agent of the police, and drove them through the town, amidst the surrounding populace. In this manner they were taken to the house of a shopkeeper of the name of Schmith, who had the title of a counsellor to the King of Prussia, and was the assistant of Freytag. The door was shut, and soldiers were put in motion to disperse the crowd. They were conveyed into the counting-house, and surrounded by clerks and servants. Madame Schmith passed Voltaire with a look of disdain, and listened to the account Freytag was drawing up with an air of importance, how he had succeeded in so important a capture ; and praised his address and courage. What a contrast ! In the words of Collini, let any one represent to himself the

author of the *Henriade* and *Merope*; he, whom Frederic had named his friend; that great man, who afterwards received in Paris the honours of an apotheosis, amidst a public intoxicated with delight; surrounded by a pack of footmen; overwhelmed with insults; treated like a slave; exposed to the taunts of the most insolent, and most wicked men; and having no other arms than his rage and indignation.

They got hold of all the effects, and of the case; they made them surrender all the money they had in their pockets; they took Voltaire's watch, his snuff-box, and some jewels he used to wear about him; he asked for an inventory, which was refused. "Count over the money;" said Schmith to his clerks, "those rascals are capable of saying there was twice as much." Collini wanted to know the cause of his arrest, and insisted upon their drawing up a declaration. He was threatened with being put into the guard-house. Voltaire claimed his snuff-box, because he could not do without snuff; they told him it was their custom to take every thing. His eyes sparkled with rage, and he looked at Collini,

for some time, as if he was searching his thoughts. Suddenly perceiving a door open, he rushed at it, and escaped. Madame Schmith formed a detachment of shopmen and three female servants, took the command, and ran after the fugitive. "Am I not allowed, then," cried he, "to provide for the necessities of nature?" He was permitted; they made a circle round him, and, after the operation, they took him in again.

As he was entering the counting-house, Schmith, who thought himself personally offended, said to him—"Wretch! thou shalt be treated without compassion, or even consideration;" and the pack of servants again began their uproar. Voltaire, almost distracted, rushed out a second time, and he was again brought in. This last scene had altered the behaviour of the resident and his gang. Schmith ordered wine to be brought, and they drank the health of his Excellency Monseigneur Freytag. In the meantime, a man entered, of the name of Dorn, who had been sent in a cart in pursuit of them. Having heard of the arrest of Voltaire at the gate of the town, he came

back, entered the counting-house, and exclaimed, "If I had caught him on the road, I would have blown out his brains." After they had waited two hours, they took the prisoners away. The portfolios and case were thrown into an empty trunk, which was shut with a padlock, and sealed with a paper, on which were Voltaire's arms and the cipher of Schmith. Dorn had the charge of conveying the prisoners to their destination. He made them enter a bad eating-house, the sign of the Goat, where twelve soldiers, commanded by a subaltern officer, were waiting for them. There Voltaire was shut up in a room with soldiers, with fixed bayonets. His secretary, Collini, was separated from him, and guarded in the same way. And it was in what was called a free town, that such insults were offered, and where the formalities, which ought to have been observed towards even public criminals, were not in the least regarded.

Madame Denis did not abandon her uncle. As soon as she heard he had been arrested, she lost no time in complaining to the burgomaster. This person, a weak and ignorant man, had been

imposed upon by Schmith. He not only refused to be just, and to listen to Madame Denis, but even ordered her not to go out of the inn. This was the reason why Voltaire was deprived of the assistance of his niece, during the scandalous scene which took place in the counting-house. When they were arrested at the gates of Frankfort, and while waiting in the carriage for the decision of Monseigneur Freytag, he took several papers out of one of the portfolios and said to Collini, "Hide that under you." He hid them in the part of the dress, called, by an ingenious writer, "the necessary garment," resolving to protest against any search they might wish to make in that quarter. In the evening, at the sign of the Goat, three soldiers guarded him, and did not lose sight of him. He had the greatest wish to see what the papers contained. To satisfy his curiosity, and deceive the vigilance of those around him, he got into bed with his clothes on; and, hid by the curtains, he took with great care, the deposit from its place of concealment: the paper contained what Voltaire had already written of his poem of *La Pucelle*. He had foreseen, if the work were to fall into the hands

of his enemies, he should not have an opportunity of recovering it; and by this means he succeeded in its preservation. Such was the love he bore to his works, that he preferred the loss of his money to the sacrifice of the productions of his genius.

Dorn, after having left them at the sign of the Goat, went, accompanied by soldiers, to that of the Golden Lion, where Madame Denis was arrested, by order of the burgomaster. He left his detachment below stairs, and presented himself to that lady, saying, her uncle wished to see her, and that he had come to convey her to him. Dorn offered her his arm, and she was no sooner out of the inn than she was surrounded by soldiers, who conducted her, not to see her uncle as she had been told, but to a garret at the sign of the Goat, where there was no other furniture than a small bed, and, to use Voltaire's own expression, "soldiers for chamber-maids, and bayonets for curtains." Dorn had the impudence to order supper for himself; and, without paying any attention to the agitation into which such an outrage had thrown Madame Denis, he began his repast, and drank several bottles of wine in her presence.

Nevertheless, Freytag and Schmith, on reflection, conceived, that such conduct might make this affair turn to their own prejudice. A letter arrived from Potzdam, which shewed, that the King was not aware of the troubles and abuses which were carried on in his name. The day after this scene, they told Madame Denis and Collini, that they might have the freedom of the house, but were not to depart. The Poetical Work was returned ; and the engagements which Voltaire and Freytag had mutually signed were exchanged. Freytag ordered the trunk, which contained the papers, money, and jewels, to be brought to the inn where he lodged. Before he opened it, he presented Voltaire with a paper to sign : this was an engagement to pay all the expenses of the capture and imprisonment. The expenses had been fixed at one hundred and twenty-eight crowns of German money. Collini was making a copy of the act, when Schmith entered the room, and, foreseeing, by the facility with which Voltaire complied, the use he might one day make of it, he tore both the original and copy, saying : “ Precautions of this nature are

useless with such persons as ourselves." Freytag and Schmith went out with one hundred and twenty-eight German crowns. Voltaire discovered that these honest gentlemen had opened his case, and stolen some of the money. He complained loudly of it; but those who personated the King of Prussia enjoyed such a good character at Frankfurt, that it was impossible to obtain any redress. Nevertheless, they were still detained in a most detestable German inn, and could not imagine the reason, as every thing was settled.

The day after, Dorn appeared, and said they were to present a petition addressed to his Excellency Monseigneur de Freytag, and Mr. de Schmith. "I am persuaded they will do any thing you wish," said he; "believe me, on my word, Mr. Freytag is a very kind gentleman." Madame Denis would not accede. The wretch affected to be civil, in hopes of getting some money; a louis rendered him the most humble of men, and the repetition of his thanks shewed that, on other occasions, he did not sell his services very dear. The secretary of the town visited the prisoners. After having made in-

quiries, he found the burgomaster had been deceived, and Madame Denis obtained leave to depart, but Voltaire was confined till positive orders arrived from Potzdam. Fearful, however, of being detained for a long period, if he depended on those gentlemen, he wrote to the Abbé de Prades. The 5th July, 1753, he received a positive answer, which put an end to all this scandal, and gave him his liberty; not through the interference of Freytag and Schmith, but through that of the magistrate of the town. The day after, on the 6th, they removed to the inn of the Golden Lion; Voltaire immediately sent for a notary, before whom he marked down all the vexations and injuries he had undergone. Collini also laid his informations, and they prepared for their departure next day.

Owing to the irritability of Voltaire, however, they were very near being again detained at Francfort. The morning before they set off, Collini had loaded two pistols, which they were in the habit of keeping in the carriage. At that moment Dorn passed slowly before the room, the door of which was open, and Voltaire perceived

him in the attitude of a man who was spying. The recollection of what had passed rekindled his passion, and, having seized a pistol, he ran towards the object on which he had fixed his attention. Collini had but just time to stop him. Dorn, terrified, ran away, and fell head-over-heels from the top of the stairs to the bottom. He went to a commissary, who directly began to write a declaration. The secretary of the town, the only man who shewed himself impartial, at last settled the affair, and they left Francfort the same day. Madame Denis remained rather longer, on some business, and afterwards set off for Paris.

It is probable, that the volume of the King's poetry was the real cause of all these troubles. This work was, according to Collini, an edition not intended for the public; it had been secretly printed in 1751, in a room of the palace at Potsdam, and a very few copies had been struck off, which the King had given to his most intimate friends. Voltaire was of that number; and he deserved it the more, because he had corrected the largest portion. It appears that, in the volume in question, there was a comic poem,

entituled, *The Palladium*. It was to this that Voltaire alluded, when he wrote from Potzdam to Madame Denis at Paris, in the month of Jan. 1751, at the time that he was in the highest favour with the King: "Are you aware, that he has written a poem in the style of my *Pucelle*, called the *Palladium*? In it he ridicules more than one class of people; but I have no army at my command as he has, and I have never gained any battles*."

If we reflect on these last words, it will be easy to perceive, that this *Palladium* turned into ridicule persons of high rank; and Frederic, fearful of making himself fresh enemies, if it made its appearance, and having little confidence in Voltaire, ordered his arrest on that account at Francfort. Most probably the Baron Pollnitz had been charged with this commission. The 7th of July, the day of their departure from Francfort, the two travellers arrived at Mayence. Voltaire was received by all the nobility, who, informed of the

* Savez-vous bien qu'il a fait un poëme, dans le gout de ma *Pucelle*, intitulé, *Le Palladium*? Il s'y moque de plus d'une sorte de gens, mais je n'ai point d'armée comme lui, et n'ai jamais gagné de batailles.

vexations he had so lately undergone, contributed what lay in their power for his gratification. He remained three weeks in Mayence, and left it on the 28th of July, to go to Manheim. Perceiving the ruined state of the Palatinate of the Rhine, in different places, which had been burnt and plundered by the French, under the command of the Marshal de Turenne, he exclaimed, "It is impossible that our nation can be loved in this country; these devastations must incessantly keep alive, among the inhabitants, a hatred of the French name; my friend, let us give ourselves out for Italians*," and he passed as an Italian nobleman. At Worms, where they slept, the innkeeper, who could speak the Tuscan language, conversed with him, while they were at supper. Voltaire was as gay as usual; made him believe a thousand ridiculous things, and rendered the repast very entertaining.

The day after, they arrived early at Manheim. That town was then the residence of the

* Il est impossible que notre nation puisse être aimée dans ce pays; ces devastations doivent rappeler sans cesse à les habitants, à la haine du nom Français; mon ami, donnons-nous ici pour Italiens.

Palatine Electors. The court was still at Schwetzingen, the beautiful mansion of the Sovereign. Voltaire seeing himself so near his native country, far from the curious and from courtiers, dedicated a few days to the arrangement of his affairs. He selected his papers, and changed all the money saved from the wreck at Francfort. A Jew, who did not neglect his own interests, negotiated this affair. As soon as the Elector Charles Theodore learnt their arrival at Mannheim, he immediately sent one of his carriages to convey Voltaire to Schwetzingen. He was lodged there with his attendants, and had the same table as the Sovereign. The court was then one of the most splendid in Germany, and one in which all kinds of pleasures were to be found in profusion. Hunting, the opera, French plays, concerts executed by the best performers in Europe, rendered the electoral palace a delightful abode for strangers of high rank and distinction, who were besides extremely well received.

All the actors of the French theatre came in a body to present their homage to the celebrated

writer who had extended their art by so many master-pieces. They solicited permission to take lessons of declamation from him. Nothing pleased Voltaire more than when he was consulted on any subject regarding the theatre, and above all on his own works. The advice he gave produced a great change in the actors; his apartment in Schwetzingen became the temple of Melpomene. Every day, after dinner, Charles Theodore had a private interview with his guest, who used to read one of his own works; or converse on literature. In order to give the elector an idea of the method he employed in his *Annales de l'Empire*, he communicated that part of the manuscript, which speaks of the reign of Charles V. Charles Theodore wished Voltaire to see the galleries and collections he had formed in the Palace of Mannheim. He went thither in his carriage. He looked over, with attention, the electoral library, the gallery of paintings, that of antiquities, and the cabinet of medals; and regarded with astonishment, as well as admiration, all that great prince had done, in so short a time, for the improvement of the sciences.

He staid a fortnight at Schwetzingen ; feasted, courted, and loaded with honours and attentions. He considered Theodore as a prince highly respectable for his beneficence, and the refinement of his sentiments, and estimable by the qualities of his heart, and his love for literature. When they quitted Schwetzingen, Voltaire promised he would return as soon as an opportunity occurred. This promise he recollected, and kept better than he had done that to Frederic, for he visited him five years afterwards. On the 15th of August he slept at Rastadt, and arrived the day after, passing through Kehl, at Strasbourg. He stopped at a small inn, at the sign of the White Bear. The celebrated Schœpflin was then residing in the town. Voltaire was desirous of knowing and consulting one who had acquired so much reputation as an historian; and collected, by this means, much information. The author of the *Annales*, proposed to him to peruse what he had already written. Schœpflin, whose time was taken up by his usual engagements, could not accept the employment, and advised Voltaire to address himself to Professor Lorentz. He undertook, with

pleasure, the task of looking over his manuscript, and of altering the errors which were likely to be found in a work written in haste during a disagreeable journey.

Voltaire, all his life, owing to his superior station in society, had recourse to those whose talents were adapted to the composition with which he was engaged. The men of letters, to whom he sometimes used to intrust his manuscripts, caused those clandestine and defective editions to be printed by eager and selfish booksellers, whom he was obliged afterwards to prosecute. Voltaire wished to stay in the Province of Alsace, till he had fixed a place for his residence. That determination depended on the news his niece should send him from Paris; where she had been ever since she had quitted Francfort, and was making use of the credit of her friends, to ascertain what were the King's intentions respecting her uncle; and whether he might live unmolested in his native country. She acted with the greatest zeal, in order to succeed in her enterprise; but she found numerous obstacles; for scrupulous and superstitious persons were afraid of his pre-

sence. The intrigues of the priests were the most furious, and the most formidable; and he received from her an exact detail of what she was doing; but nothing was announced, which could hinder him from continuing his journey towards the interior of France.

As he was obliged to stop in Alsace, he made up his mind to inhabit Colmar. The brother of Professor Schœpflin had some presses there, and he proposed to him the impression of his *Annales de l'Empire*, which were almost finished. This offer was accepted. He immediately made preparations for changing his residence. The 2d of October, 1753, they left the house of Madame de Leon, and arrived at Colmar the same day. Voltaire hired an apartment in the house of Mr. Goll. That town offered him the advantage of having his works printed under his own superintendance. He found, among the persons who composed the Senate of Alsace, an agreeable society and literary resources, and he was equally well situated, as in Strasbourg, for receiving news from Madame Denis.

As soon as he arrived *Les Annales* were put to

press. Voltaire hearing his printer had a paper-mill six leagues from Colmar, near the mountains of the Vosges, and the little town of Munster, went to visit it. Mr. Lepan observes, that this retreat into the mountains of the Vosges was caused by the publication at the Hague, by Jean Neaulme, of the abridgment of the *Universal History*, attributed to Voltaire, and in which Louis XV. and the clergy were very much abused. There, however, appears an anachronism in this statement, for Collini mentions the printing subsequent to this period.

They found a large isolated building, exposed to every wind, in which he could not even expect to find a comfortable lodging. Here he remained a fortnight in almost complete solitude. The workmen and girls employed in the paper-mill were its only inhabitants. They could do nothing but cook, and clean the rooms. A Frenchman, of the name of Bellon, who was there, under government, to take an exact account of the quantity of paper furnished by the establishment for the manufacture of playing cards, was the only man to

whom they could speak. He could play at chess tolerably well, the only game Voltaire liked; this, and walking, were their amusements. In the vicinity of the paper-mill, was the Castle of Horbourg, depending on a property which belonged to the Duke of Wurtemberg, and which had been mortgaged to Voltaire for a sum of money lent to that prince. He had some thoughts of buying it, had it been habitable. The 23d of October, he went to visit it; but finding every thing in a dilapidated state, and the lands badly cultivated, he returned the same day to his original miserable dwelling.

We perceive that, at this time, his intention was not to quit France for the purpose of residing in a foreign country. The 28th of October, they left the mountains, to go to Colmar. They intended remaining in that town until Voltaire should receive news from Paris. The cabal, which was anxious to prevent his return, was still, however, in motion. Colmar is in such a situation that the passenger may, at a very short notice, enter Switzerland and Germany, or even penetrate into the in-

terior of France. While he was waiting to decide on this point, Voltaire took the resolution of keeping house, of which Collini had the management. A young girl from Montbeliard, who spoke German and French, was their cook. Her name was Babet. She was gay, lively, fond of conversation, and had the talent of amusing the philosopher. She paid him also those kinds of attention, which servants are not in the general habit of practising towards their masters, and he used to treat her with liberality and kindness. Collini says, he used sometimes to joke Babet on account of her interest in Voltaire, and she only replied by laughing. Their manner of living was quiet and regular. He was not visited by any Jesuits at Colmar; those priests had good reasons for not seeing him; he had also something to apprehend on their account. A few friends, counsellors and advocates to the sovereign counsel of Alsace, formed his ordinary society; among the last may be noted Mr. Dupont, an amiable man, and a lover of literature, with whom Voltaire afterwards corresponded. Here, he arranged his *Annales de l'Empire*. The tranquillity which he enjoyed was,

however, disturbed by one of those events which cannot always be anticipated.

Jean Neaulme, a bookseller of Holland, had obtained an imperfect manuscript from Voltaire. He had it altered by a paltry writer, and printed at the Hague, under the title of *Abrégé de l'Histoire Universelle, par M. de Voltaire*, 1753, without the knowledge of the real author. They had, intentionally, mutilated phrases, which, presented in that manner, could not fail to give fresh cause for persecution. They intended, indeed, to shew this, by burning the work, and attacking the writer, when Voltaire received the real manuscript from Paris. To convince the public he had nothing to do with the impression of the work, altered and printed with a bad design, he instituted an information, in which the abridgment, published by Jean Neaulme, was compared with the manuscript received from Paris; and this put an end to the business.

Another occurrence gave him some uneasiness. Madame Denis informed him, that they were watching him from Versailles, and that he had been traced at every place since he left Branden-

bourg, and that he was even watched in that part of the frontiers of France. This was in the month of April, towards Easter. Spies were already abroad, to see whether he would at that feast fulfil the duties imposed by his religion. His friends were informed of the experiment they were desirous of making upon him,—a trial more apt to incline a man to hypocrisy than to the duties of a really good catholic, and advised him to do what was necessary. They thought, by that means, to quiet the mind of the public, and to obtain permission for him to return to Paris. Voltaire asked Collini, if it was his intention to receive the sacrament at Easter, he answered, that it was. “Well,” said he, “we will receive it together.” Every thing was prepared for the ceremony, and a monk came to visit him. Collini was in his room when he arrived. A moment after he went out, and only returned when he heard the monk had departed. The day after, they went to church, and received the sacrament together. As soon as Voltaire returned home, he sent twelve bottles of wine, and a loin of veal to the convent. The news

was circulated at Paris, that the sacrament had been administered to him, for the first time, at Colmar.

Being wearied at seeing no end to the negotiations undertaken by his niece; being also in want of her assistance, and wishing to avoid his enemies, and particularly Father Croust, a Jesuit, the rector of the college of Colmar, who desired him to quit the town, lest he should spread in it the principles of the new philosophy, Voltaire agreed with Madame Denis, they should meet at the waters of Plombières. He set off accordingly on the 8th of June, leaving his secretary to attend to the impression of the *Annales de l'Empire*. He was, on the 11th, at the abbey de Senones, half-way, when he received a letter from Madame Denis, which informed him, that Condamine and Maupertuis were at the Waters, and that it would be improper for him to proceed, for fear it might give rise to a ridiculous and scandalous scene. He remained accordingly more than three weeks at Senones; during which time he made extracts from the library of that abbey. He went afterwards to Plombières, where the

Comte d'Argental came to visit him. After he had remained there about twenty days, he returned to Colmar with his niece, towards the end of July. About three months after his return, (during which time he had been occupied in correcting the *Orphelin de la Chine*,) Father Croust, whom we have already mentioned, succeeded, by the interposition of his brother, the confessor of Madame la Dauphine, in obliging him (November, 1754,) to quit the town which he had inhabited for so considerable a time.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALWAYS in a state of uncertainty as to where he should establish himself, Voltaire resolved to visit the court of King Stanislaus, whom he saved from being cheated by his steward, Alliot. This person made economical arrangements at the expense of his master; and, like most other stewards, to the emolument of his own pocket. The story, however, is differently related by Mr. Lepan. At this time is mentioned the appearance of Voltaire at Luneville, and his expulsion from the court of Stanislaus. It is said, the King, displeased with the conduct of the philosopher, and with his attempts at making proselytes to incredulity, asked Mr. Alliot, his aulic counsellor, "Could not you deliver me from that Voltaire, against whom the voice of every one is raised?" The counsellor answered, "*Hoc genus demoniorum non ejicitur nisi in oratione aut*

Jejunio *. But, I don't think the first of these means would be successful." "Well," replied the King, "let us try the last." This project was punctually executed; Voltaire the next day could not get any breakfast in the palace. He addressed a note to Mr. Alliot, who pretended not to understand him. He wrote to the King, who sent no answer. The same day he left the court.

When he quitted Stanislaus, philosophy attracted him to the monks of Senones; Don Calmet, with whom he was intimate, was their abbot. Voltaire had occasion for the work on which he was then engaged, to consult books of theology, and he was received among these children of the church with the more pleasure, as they conceived the possibility of making him a good Christian; and the philosopher conducted himself so as to cause his friends to say, when he departed, that they had before he left them, converted a person, who, on his arrival, was the greatest Deist existing.

* This kind of evil spirit is not to be ejected but by prayer or fasting.

Voltaire, allowing this deception to pass, went to Geneva. The gates of the town were shut, but they were opened on his name being announced. After having remained at an inn two or three days, he went to the Canton-de-Vaud and occupied the castle of Prangin, which the proprietor had left at his disposal. It was here that, at the solicitation of Comte d'Argental, he wrote the *Orphelin de la Chine*, in five acts, which was before only in three. He was visited by the two Cramer's, booksellers of Geneva, who had printed in that town, the first edition of his works, published in 1757.

Voltaire was desirous, at that time, of purchasing a considerable property; he first bought the country-house, named Montrion, situated in the vicinity of Lausanne, and soon afterwards purchased from a magistrate of Geneva, on a lease during his own life, for the sum of eighty-seven thousand livres, a fine domain, situated one league from Geneva, and known by the name of Sur-Saint-Jean, to which he substituted that of *Délices*. Such a name was, in every way, suited to a place so delightful, on account of its picturesque

situation, and beautiful gardens. He used to spend the fine season at the *Délices*; and only returned to Montrion during the worst part of the winter. His manner of living was splendid; his table was abundantly furnished, though he only appeared at it during supper-time; and his equipages were very elegant; he also built a theatre, but the Genevoise exclaimed against that novelty, and he was obliged to content himself with a temporary one in a tent, where his plays were privately performed.

In the midst of these pleasures, he was disturbed by the news, that they had published in Paris, a surreptitious edition of his *Pucelle*, as well as of the *Campagnes de Louis XV.*, or *Memoirs of the War of 1741*. Before he had established himself at the *Délices*, he went to see Lyons, where the populace were delighted at his appearance, and acted the *Duke de Foix* and *Brutus*; and during all the time of his stay, he was honoured with the loudest acclamations of praise. On his return to Switzerland, Madame Denis, his niece, superintended his family concerns.

One of the first-fruits of his retreat, was the

tragedy of *Gengis Khan* and *Candide* ; the latter of which may be considered as one of the most original compositions of the author. For two years it had the most astonishing popularity ; and there existed hardly a magistrate, military man, or even priest, to whom it was not familiar. It is the work in which the imagination is most forcibly seized, and the reader is conveyed along with the narration ; the style is easy and familiar, and the probability of occurrence of the incidents admitted without question. Perhaps some may conclude by acquiescing in the opinion of the Dervise of the fable, who supposes us placed in this world, much on the same plan as rats inhabit a ship which the Grand Seignior sends to Egypt.

The essay on *The Spirit and Manners of Nations*, was also composed at this time. But Voltaire's repose was only short-lived. The surreptitious edition of the *Pucelle* had, in truth, appeared, in which were verses against the King and La Marquise de Pompadour, who at that time possessed great influence. A young man of the name of Grasset, at Geneva, had an order from her to pro-

cure a copy of the work, at whatever price might be demanded. Of this he informed Voltaire, adding, that he knew of one for which fifty louis were asked. Voltaire promised the sum, and only asked to see the verses against Madame de Pompadour and Louis XV. Grasset returned the next day to the *Délices*, with them, to receive the money. Voltaire, when he read them, exclaimed several times, "*I'm a lost man.*" They tried, in vain, to quiet his mind; but, imagining that Grasset had the remainder of the poem in his pocket, he seized him by the throat, exclaiming, "Restore, wretch! restore that infamous *Pucelle*, or I will strangle thee *!"

The alarmed bookseller escaped from his hands, and fled out of the house. Voltaire ordered his carriage; proceeded to Geneva, and had a warrant issued against the bookseller, who was imprisoned. Grasset acknowledged that the manuscript was in the house of an ironmonger; it was found at that of a linen-draper, and burnt. After being confined in prison, Grasset was discharged; but, according

* Rends, malheureux! rends cette infâme Pucelle, ou je t'étrangle.

to the law of Geneva, Voltaire, in his turn, was condemned to remain in custody. Grasset claimed the law; but Mr. de Paulney, then an envoy from the court of France to the Republic, pleaded the age and titles to protection of Voltaire, and Grasset was again remanded; and, not being able to succeed through the law, he raised all the clergymen of Geneva in his favour. Among the rest, Jacob Vernet, who had been a frequent guest at the *Délices*, and had made the proprietor an offer of editing his works. The philosopher having refused the services of the theologian, rendered him an implacable enemy.

Shortly before this, Collini had been obliged to leave Voltaire's house. He had involuntarily offended Madame Denis, whom he esteemed, and she also esteemed him; but her self-love had been, most probably, provoked. Collini confessed that he had mentioned her in a letter which he wrote to another, and which was full of jests. The letter being left open on his desk, was taken to Madame Denis. This was sufficient to cause a quarrel, and to oblige the uncle to discharge his secretary, with whom

he had lived for five years, and who had been the companion of his misfortunes when he left Prussia.

Voltaire, however, did not cease, till his death, to entertain a correspondence with Collini; for whom he always expressed much interest, and afterwards obtained for him the place of historiographer and secretary to the Bavarian Palatine Elector, Charles Theodore; whom we have already mentioned. It was on the 6th of June, 1756, that Collini left the *Délices*. Towards the end of the same year, Voltaire bought a house at Lausanne, which had fifteen windows in front, and from which, when in bed, he could see fifteen leagues of the Lake over Geneva, Savoy, and the Alps. That house was intended to be his residence for winter, instead of Montrion, which he sold the following year. His partiality for the theatre decided him to that change, more than any other reason. "They perform so well here," said he to Thiriot, "and there is so much good society, that I have made the acquisition of a house at the extremity of the town."

The seceder from the court of Prussia had

promised to the Elector Palatine, when he was at Schwetzingen, that he would pay him a second visit. He kept his word, and visited him in the month of July, 1758. Passing through Strasbourg, he saw Collini, who was then governor to the son of the Comte de Sauer, the Seigneur of Styrie: he also saw him when he returned, in the following month. He remained a few days at Strasbourg, returning from thence to the *Délices*. The domain had been much embellished since it belonged to Voltaire; but he was aware of the impossibility of having a theatre; and that was his greatest privation. He had just bought the territory of Ferney, a league distant from the *Délices*, on the French territory, where he built a good house, which will be mentioned hereafter. He also bought, at the same time, from Desbrosses, the president to the parliament of Dijon, the chateau de Tournay, situated between Ferney and Geneva; three quarters of a league from the latter place. It was from thence he sometimes took the name of the Comte de Tournay. One of the first expenses he incurred was in building a theatre; which however was but indifferent. He,

nevertheless, performed Alvarez in *Alzire*, Narbus in *Merope*, and Argire in *Tancred*.

Voltaire had introduced true knowledge, and a free mode of reasoning, into Geneva; and, by his residence, attracted numbers to that city. Some of the more pious asserted, that the inhabitants of Geneva would become a people of free-thinkers, and that they would be damned without appeal. Those of the new school, forgetting that they were children of Calvin, tried to drown the evils of this life in the pursuit of pleasure; and the works of Voltaire and Rousseau gave a new degree of activity to minds already violently agitated.

Rousseau was one of the most eloquent writers that had yet appeared; not indeed of that sublime eloquence which raises and purifies the mind, but which, by enveloping it in a cloud of doubts and false reasonings, carries it along without conviction. He originally condemned all civil states of life, and maintained, that man who thinks is a degraded animal, and that he proceeds further from happiness the more knowledge he acquires. This paradox, or rather this bad mode of reasoning, had the misfortune to be noticed by

the academy at Dijon. Voltaire, to whom Rousseau sent his work, thanked him in a very flattering letter; but he observed in jest, "that so much wit had never been displayed in wishing to render us brutes*," and that, when he read his discourse, "he had a fancy to walk upon four legs†."

This remark offended Rousseau, and he became an enemy of Voltaire, which the other had long expected. From the favourable reception which was given to his book upon the *Inequality of Conditions*, he was induced to advance some other opinions equally wild and inconsistent, and openly declaimed against the sciences and philosophy; maintaining that they only deteriorated the human species, which was destined by nature to live in forests, and feed on acorns. He was infatuated with the flowers of a false and enthusiastic mode of reasoning; and, like the scorpion, surrounded with fire, the wildness of his own genius proved his ruin. His *Émile*, which is one of the

* Qu'on n'avait jamais mis tant d'esprit à vouloir nous rendre bêtes.

† Il prenait envie de marcher à quatre pattes.

best works of the kind that he ever wrote, not merely on account of its beauties, but of the many useful views which it discloses, and which are different from those commonly received, drew a storm upon his head. The parliament of Paris burnt the work, which had been printed in Holland; and issued a warrant for the apprehension of Rousseau. This was the first time, that a stranger was found amenable to justice in a territory on which he had committed no crime.

Voltaire offered him the house of the hermitage as a protection, and assured him, that he might philosophize there at his ease. Rousseau replied to him, in a celebrated letter, of which this is the beginning and the end, "I do not love you, Sir, because you corrupt my republic by your comedies*."—"Our friend, Jean Jacques, is more mad than I imagined," was the reply of Voltaire. "It is not services, or advice, he requires, but bubbles." This anecdote

* Je ne vous aime pas, Monsieur, parce que vous corrompez ma république par vos comédies.

dote is mentioned because the least thing relating to these two famous men is worthy of recollection. But the same republic, so dear to Rousseau, did not hesitate to burn his work, and to attempt to arrest the author. And, if every government had thought as the parliament of Paris, and the council of Geneva, Rousseau would not have been able to establish himself any where.

For many years there might be perceived in France an impudent and despicable cabal, which affected to speak of philosophers as dangerous to the state. By them the celebrated Diderot was imprisoned at Vincennes, in 1745, upon the denunciation of the attorney-general, Gilbert des Voisins. The parliament had caused the *Pensées Philosophiques* to be burnt; and Diderot, their author, was put into the dungeon of Vincennes. Finding himself confined, he became nearly distracted; and, to avert the horrible calamity of madness, they were obliged often to allow him free egress when he pleased. The misfortune, which he was on the point of suffering, is to be feared for every one who, having strong passions,

is deprived of liberty, and intercourse with human creatures.

The same association which raised the hand of the magistrate against the honest and virtuous Helvetius, who was obliged to make an apology to his judges, issued a decree for the arrest of Rousseau, and the suppression of that vast repository of arts and sciences, the *Encyclopædia*. It was also the same conspiracy which occasioned the burning of the *Cantique des Cantiques*. M. de Fleury, in demanding the condemnation of this poem, said, it was too evident, that Voltaire had written it in direct opposition to all religious sentiments. The members of the chamber, without reflecting upon the author's power of criticism, acquiesced; and the Abbé Terray, who lived publicly with two prostitutes, and had a number of bastard children, declared, that it was a licentious publication. Such complaints, and such judgments, coming from the lips of such accusers, may, very possibly, have confirmed Voltaire in opinions hostile to the religion of his country. Nothing is so irritating as obstinate folly and ignorance. Freron and the Abbé Gauchet also joined; and indeed

these are the only two respectable names in the list. There were, however, many more, whom Voltaire, in his poem of *Le Pauvre Diable*, which is by Duvernet put on a par with the best satires of Boileau, and in the *Russe à Paris*, held up to public derision.

M. Pompignan, who had characterized Voltaire as a dangerous writer, was assailed with epigrams of every kind, and of every description. The two concluding verses of the little poem, entitled *La Vanité*,

César n'a point d'Azile où sa cendre repose,
Et l'ami Pompignan veut être quelque chose,

were engraved, in the year 1760, on the wall of one of the rooms in the Bastille. The defeat of Pompignan was complete; he did not shew himself again at Versailles, or in the French academy. A petition, which he presented against Voltaire, completed his ridicule. He was, in fact, led into this error by the vanity of thinking, that Louis, in the midst of a very serious and dangerous war, would trouble himself with a private quarrel between two wits. If he had brought the complaint before the parliament, who

were all enemies to Voltaire, the affair might have ended in a very different manner.

The Bishop of Puy, in Valais, the brother of this same M. Pompignan, who was the jest of all Paris, descended to the conflict and took up arms for his brother; and, in an address to his parishioners, he displayed the bitterness of his zeal against English and French philosophers; a description of persons very little known, or cared for, in his territory. Voltaire replied to this, in his "*Lettre d'un Quaker à l'ami Jean Georges*," in which we find as much wit and irony as in the writings of Pascal, and more playfulness. A sentiment of revenge, or, to give the best motive to the action, a remnant of zeal against the philosophers, made the prelate, when he was raised to the archbishopric, in 1781, excommunicate the subscribers to the works of Voltaire; but, when we peruse his mandate, which is very different from those of Bossuet and Fenelon, the reader must wonder, that he did not confine himself to his text, instead of vainly attacking the sentiments of philosophy.

After the defeat of M. Pompignan, and even

amidst the controversies with his enemies, Voltaire produced *Tancred*; which, for the first time, displayed, on the French theatre, the manners and customs of ancient chivalry; and, whilst Paris and the provinces were resounding with the applauses bestowed on this tragedy, its author impaled his adversary Freron, as Apollo did Marsyas in *L'Écossaise*; and when we see Wasph on the stage, all the enemies of Freron may be appeased.

We must now, says Duvernet, turn our eyes from those subjects, which ought only to be mentioned with regret, and see Voltaire receive at his house, with the tenderness of a father, a young grand-daughter of the great Corneille. She had passed her infancy in a small village, with her mother, employed in making osier baskets, which the father sold at the market at Évreux. They were, however, obliged to proceed to Paris, and for a long time lingered in want; but, assuming the name of Corneille, they interested a company of actors, who gave them the benefit of a representation of *Rodogune*, which served to pay their immediate debts. But this resource, was only temporary. Voltaire was applied

to in behalf of this family; they thought him capable of doing a good action, and they were not deceived; he adopted her, although he was building a church,—an odd expenditure for the philosopher,—and making some additions to his house. He thought that one, who had served under the standard of the great Corneille, ought to neglect no opportunity of being useful to the descendant of his general.

Whilst Madame Denis was occupied in the education of Mademoiselle Corneille, Voltaire made arrangements for her future establishment in life. In order to effect this, he wrote a commentary on the works of her grand-father, which had been long wanted, to facilitate their perusal for foreigners. A subscription was opened for the work, to which almost all the nobility and crowned heads of Europe lent their assistance. What made this more striking was, that, whilst Mademoiselle Corneille was alone, and destitute, many vain and extravagant coxcombs were ruining themselves by the profusion of their expenses with actresses.

Pleasing as this anecdote may be, I must, in strict

justice, give the different relation of M. Lepan; it is as follows: "One cannot have a single doubt," says he, "as to the reason which induced Voltaire to receive Mademoiselle Corneille at his house, when he himself says: "there are in an ode of *Le Brun's* (which had been sent to the author of the *Henriade*, recommending Mademoiselle Corneille to his notice, and in which Voltaire is preferred to Homer) admirable verses; and, above all, the last ones which appeared to me sublime; and I own they induced me to receive my young friend, and to take as much care of her as if she had been my daughter."

"To undertake such a noble project, has the author of the *Henriade* waited till the three last strophes? It is difficult to believe it, when we read those which precede them. The three biographical philosophers, Duvernet, Condorcet, and the Marquis de Luchet, cannot give too much praise to their favourite. According to them, Mademoiselle Corneille was a child, without any resources in Paris. She was the grand-daughter, and the only surviving branch of the family of the great Corneille. She received at the *Délices*

the greatest attention, and all kinds of masters were appointed for her education. Voltaire gave her a considerable dowry. This, nevertheless, is the truth; Maria Françoise Corneille was neither the grand-daughter nor the niece of the great Corneille; she was of another branch. She was not a child without any resources in Paris; for she was sixteen years old, and was at the convent of the abbey Saint Antoine, in which there were ladies of high birth. Her father had obtained her entrance into it, by consecrating to her education part of the sum of five thousand francs, the produce of a representation given for her benefit by the French comedians. We cannot read, without interest, the letter which he had written to the comedians, to ask that representation, and their answer. Marie Françoise Corneille did not find any masters at the *Délices*; she only learnt to play some parts in tragedies, and the business of a waiting-maid. She did not receive from Voltaire a large dowry; she had only the hopes of having something out of the produce of the edition, in which the works of her cousin were so improperly commented upon.

The proof that Mademoiselle Corneille did not receive from Voltaire a considerable sum of money, may be gathered from what the latter observes in a letter to the Count d'Argental, the 15th of February, 1763. 'We had much trouble in persuading the protector of Mr. Dupuits to regard the sale of a book as a dowry.' The editor of the works was even so far from advancing the funds requisite for the edition, that he wrote to M. de Marmontel respecting two hundred copies, to which Louis XV. had subscribed, and requested that four bills of a hundred louis each might be sent, payable on the receipt of the first volume. '*I shall not embark in this undertaking, without such a guarantee,*' he observed to the Count d'Argental."

Tournay being only three quarters of a league from Geneva, some of the inhabitants used to come and see the plays, and spoke very much in favour of this kind of amusement; others in its condemnation with equal violence. Mr. Tronchin Boissier, the attorney-general, visited Voltaire, and informed him that the troubles which he caused would force the republic to make a great sacrifice, but which was necessary for

their tranquillity. Voltaire, who thought his party sufficiently strong, continued the representations. A law was proposed, which might prevent any citizen from performing comedies in any part of the canton. The populace had even a project of driving him away, and burning his house. Not finding himself in security on the Genevoise territory, he left the *Délices*, stating, as a reason for so doing, that he was not rich enough to live there, and that the state of his health, which required the most complete seclusion, was incompatible with the concourse of strangers, which the vicinity of Geneva attracted. This, however, was not less at Ferney than at the *Délices*. The first mentioned house contained fourteen bed-chambers, which were intended for those strangers who came to visit the philosopher. "Tell them that I am not here," said he, one day; "won't they let me breathe? do they take me for the beast of Gevaudan*?"

Voltaire was often in the habit of saying, that he was very ill, and was going to die. In a great num-

* Qu'on dise que je n'y suis pas, qu'on me laisse respirer ! me prennent-ils pour la bête du Gevaudan ?

ber of his letters he complains of the state of his health. Sometimes, when strangers called upon him, he used to send word by his servant, that he was indisposed, and ordered them refreshments; and, if they insisted on seeing him, his secretary went instead of himself. It was only when they expressed a still stronger desire, that the master of the house made his appearance; and, if the persons pleased him (and the surest way, observes Mr. Lepan, to ensure his kindness was to pay him great compliments), then he forgot his indisposition, and often walked with them for several hours in the gardens. When they quitted him, and shewed a desire of seeing him again, "*Most willingly, said he, but I shall be no more**." Biørnstahl, who was received in that way in 1770, assures us he had done the same for thirty years. When he gave up his lease of the *Délices*, he lost by the transaction forty-nine thousand francs, and more than thirty thousand francs expended in alterations on the domain.

Towards the end of the year, Voltaire proposed to the King of Prussia to establish a small colony

* "*Très volontiers, mais je ne serai plus.*"

of French philosophers at Clèves, who might speak the truth with freedom, and without fear of priests, ministers, or parliament. For that purpose he solicited a particular building near Clèves. Frederic answered him, "That house which you mentioned has been ruined by the French, which must prevent your colony from establishing itself there; and I think the best way would be, to send somebody to Clèves, to see what would suit them best, of what I could dispose of in their favour." Voltaire having renewed his proposition regarding his friends the following year, the King wrote to him, "I can grant to them all they ask except wood, which the residence of their countrymen has entirely destroyed in those forests; on condition, however, that they will pay respect to those who deserve it, and that, in printing, they will observe decency in their writings."

It must be allowed, that this was a singular recommendation to make to philosophers; but Frederic knew with whom he had to deal. The Baron d'Holback had lent his house to a society, which was established in it, under the title of the

Réunion d'Holback ou des Économistes, and which was nothing else than an assembly of philosophers, of which the principal members were, Condorcet, Diderot, Demilaville, le Comte d'Argental, and le Baron Grimm. "This," said the secretary of that committee, in 1789, "is what constituted our occupations: the greatest part of the books which have for a long time appeared against religion, morals, kings, and governments, were our works, or those of our initiated authors. They were all composed by the members, or by the express orders of the society. Before they were printed, they were sent to our office. We used to alter them according to circumstances, and as was found necessary, and generally dictated to the authors what they were to write. Afterwards, the work appeared under a title, or a name, which we chose, in order to conceal the hand from which it came. Many, supposed to be posthumous works, such as *Le Christianisme Dévoilé*, and others, attributed to Freret, Boulanger, &c., after their death, were issued by our society.

"After having given our approbation to all the books, we had a sufficient number struck off on

fine paper, to reimburse the expense of printing; and then an immense quantity of copies on coarser paper, which we used to send either to booksellers or hawkers, who received them for almost nothing, and were obliged to sell them at a very low price*.

The objection which Rousseau manifested to the establishment of Voltaire in his native country,—his refusal to come to Geneva, whilst he was there,—the reproach, which, if we believe the latter, he caused to be made by the body of deputies to the Council of Geneva, because they suffered, in spite of the law, a Catholic to settle on their territory, inflamed the anger of our philosopher. Hence the accusations which are to be found in his letter to Mr. Hume, in which he pretends, that Jean Jacques declared, before he received the sacrament in 1762, that he would write against the Romish church, and that he would speak against the infernal work of Helvetius, &c. These promises are not, however, contained in the declaration.

* On this subject more details may be seen in the first volume of the *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme*. Par M. Barruel, Chap. xvii.

This is the reason why Voltaire wrote a letter to the Duke de Choiseul, to complain that Rousseau alone had troubled the peace in Geneva. "I wonder," said he to Dorat, "how you can dignify by the title of great man, a wheedler only known by ridiculous paradoxes, and shameful conduct." It was in a poem, however, *La Guerre de Genève*, that he spoke the most on that subject, and of which Jean Jacques is the principal object. Even his panegyrists must allow the inconsistency of the philosopher, who has preached so much in favour of tolerance and humanity, in so grossly abusing a fellow-creature in distress.

In 1769, George Christophe Waechter, engraver to the Elector Palatine, having drawn the head of Voltaire, at Ferney, made it into a bronze medal, with this verse of the *Henriade* :

Il ôte aux nations le bandeau de l'erreur.

The other side of the medal represented an altar on which were the emblems of the heroes of epic and dramatic poetry, such as trumpets, helmets, swords, musical instruments, masks, and other symbols. The inscription it bore was,

Sereniss. Principi.

Car. Theod. Electori Palatino, offerebat G.C. Waechter, jun.
MDCCLXIX.

and also,

Voltaire, né le XX. Fevrier, MDCXCIV.

The engraver had hired a press in Geneva, to strike out an engraving; but as soon as the inhabitants heard of the verse inscribed, they prevented Waechter from continuing its impression, and ordered him to quit their territory within four-and-twenty hours. The same verse having also displeased the Elector, he would not allow his name to be affixed. There were hardly more than ten or twelve prints struck off. The year after, Waechter made another medal, on which he put a crown instead of the verse, and these words instead of the name of the Elector:

Tiré d'après nature au château de Ferney.

G. C. Waechter, gravé.

MDCCLXX.

The same year, the philosophers of the capital, erected a statue to their chief. The Empress of Russia, the King of Prussia, and several sovereign princes, contributed to its design; but,

what is to be more particularly remarked, is, that Jean Jacques Rousseau, who had been so hardly treated by the philosopher, was desirous of becoming a subscriber.

In the meantime, dissensions increased from day to day at Geneva. The ideas of Rousseau were circulated, and the people would neither have balls, nor plays, nor any other public amusement. Many persons, foreseeing the storm, left the town, and Voltaire did not find the *Délices* an asylum; for, destined by his genius to shake the opinions of the world, he did not feel himself secure any where against the fury of fanaticism. He had condemned the founder of their institutions, Calvin, as an atrocious and barbarous man; and not feeling himself safe in the republic of Geneva, he removed as I have before mentioned, to Ferney, situated on the territory of France. After he had rendered this place fit for his residence, he raised another chapel to God. The one existing was not sufficiently good, he rebuilt it at his own expense, without making his tenantry pay any contribution.

It is true that, in destroying the old one, he

neglected the canonical forms, and the Archbishop of Anecy, in whose diocese Ferney was situated, complained bitterly of this neglect: "Of what does his lordship complain?" said the philosopher? "his God and mine inhabited a barn, and I have lodged him in a decent temple: the Christ was of worm-eaten wood, and I have caused one to be gilded for him like an emperor*." Out of the church, and under the windows of his chamber, he erected a mausoleum; and, as a tailor takes the measure of a dress, he measured the bier which was one day to contain his remains. This monument, of a simple and antique shape, placed in his sight, reminded him of his death, of which he often talked. It is true, however, that he strewed flowers on the path which led to it. He had a theatre in his house, and all the luxuries and pleasures of life as at the *Délices*. The following description is given of his house by Biœrnstahl, in 1773, which is the more interesting,

* De quoi se plaint Monseigneur? Son Dieu et le mien étoit logé dans une grange, et je l'ai logé dans un temple honnête. Le Christ étoit de bois vermoulu, et je lui en ai fait dorer un, comme un empereur.

since it is the year in which he visited Ferney for the second time, and also because it was nearer the end of Voltaire's life. "Ferney is situated in a village in the country of Gex, department of Ain, on the frontiers of France, only two leagues from Geneva. In 1758, Voltaire bought a fine farm in the neighbourhood of that village, which produced much hay, corn, and wheat. The following year he built a house with such expedition, that although only begun in April, it was finished by the end of June. That house, independent of his own apartments, contains fourteen bed-rooms for strangers. The chambers are very well furnished, and ornamented, as one may see, with pictures by the greatest masters, such as a Venus by Paul Veronese, a Flora by Guido Reni, (these two pictures had belonged to the late Duke of Orleans.) There are also two pictures of Albane, one representing the toilet of Venus, the other some Cupids asleep; which are still in their original situation.

"In the room of Madame Denis, is to be seen the picture of Catherine, the empress of Russia, made of silk by an artist of Lyons, named La Salle,

who presented it to Voltaire. A statue, and many other things, made of plaster, are still exhibited in the house. In one of the rooms, are several family pictures, and that of the Marchioness of Pompadour, painted by herself, which she gave to Voltaire. In the room where strangers are received, is the picture of Madame du Châtelet, with several busts made of bronze, of Newton, Locke, &c.

“The library of Voltaire is a very fine one. There are about six or seven thousand volumes, a great part of which consists of works on theology and history. All the Italian poetry, books of all sciences, dictionaries of all the known languages, are to be found in this collection. There is also a stuffed tiger, which appears as fierce as if he were alive, and ready to spring at you. The garden is very fine and extensive. There is a wood of linden-trees and poplars, which is valued at two hundred thousand francs. There are some very fine walks, which lead from the garden into the park. There are also some good views. In the middle, is a large old linden-tree, which covers the thicket with its branches. This is called the Cabinet of Voltaire,

because it is the place where he used to compose. When he was there, no one dared to approach; and, when in good health, he used it for writing.

“Near this tree is a spot where he kept silk-worms. He had some stockings made out of the silk, so that he might with justice say, he wore the produce of his own farm. Near the building for the silk-worms, is a field, called the field of M. de Voltaire, because he used to cultivate it with his own hands. He always worked in it till prevented by illness. There are also some beautiful labyrinths, flower-gardens, good grapes, and vineyards. The Mount Blanc and the flower-gardens offer a contrast, which could hardly be found elsewhere. There is a bathing-place which Voltaire built three years since. It is a small marble pavilion, supplied by two leaden pipes with cold and warm water. But the place has been much altered since the owner's death. The Genevoise often came there, and none of the travellers who visited Switzerland failed in paying him their respects.

“ This, however, did not take up much of his time. He received them for the space of five or six minutes, and as they knew he was always occupied, they did not importune him longer with their company. They were entertained in the most hospitable manner, and conducted over the house and gardens. There were some occasions, indeed, when much pressed by his literary avocations, on which persons have staid several days in the house without gaining an interview. Mr. Guibert, the author of an excellent work *sur la Tactique*, after five days’ residence, was leaving Ferney ungratified with a sight of the owner, when he sent the following four lines :

Je comptais, en ces lieux, voir le Dieu du Génie,
L’entendre, lui parler, et m’instruire en tout point,
Mais c’est comme Jésus en son eucharistie,
On le boit, on le mange, et on ne le voit point.

“ Mr. Guibert, as we may easily imagine, by this means, gained an interview, and was kindly received. We may easily pardon Voltaire, at this time, since he was always employed in something useful, and could not have the train of his

studies and ideas interrupted by the reception of visitors."

In 1762, an occurrence happened, which required all his attention, and must strike all with horror in the perusal; I mean the death of Calas. The parliament of Toulouse had executed on the wheel a man of sixty years old, of simple manners, and a tradesman of strict and known probity. He was a protestant, and his judges were catholics. In order to murder him under cover of the law, they accused him of having himself assassinated his son Marc Antony. His widow, plunged into a dark dungeon, did not see the light again, except to hear the judgment of banishment passed on her son Pierre and herself. But in order to induce the former to abjure his sins, he was shut up in a convent of Dominican monks, from whom he escaped, and came to Geneva with his proscribed and dishonoured mother.

They were presented to Voltaire, who heard their story with regret, but with that conviction of their innocence, which could not have been doubted by the most incredulous person. They were interrogated by the Duke of Richelieu, and

the Duke of Villars, who were at that time at Ferney ; and who, having heard Madame Calas, did not hesitate to say, that the parliament of Toulouse had executed an innocent man. Voltaire inquired into the evidences, from which it appeared, that the inhabitants of Toulouse were blinded by fanaticism during the trial ;—that Mr. de la Salle, who was one of the council, had retired into the country in order to avoid his share of the business ;—that, out of the thirteen judges who subscribed to the condemnation, six were of opinion, that he was not guilty ;—and that the priest who accompanied Calas to the scaffold, exclaimed, when the axe was falling, “ The sufferer is innocent.”

Voltaire was of the same opinion with those who did not desire the death of Calas, and with the priest who was present at the scaffold. He had no doubt but that his death had been occasioned by fanaticism and superstition. He began by bringing the cause of Calas before a tribunal : the confused and contradictory statements of the witnesses ; the irregularities of the proceedings ; a detail of the imputed murder

and of the probabilities for supposing Calas innocent. The misfortunes of the family, owing to the interest which Voltaire took in them, were soon espoused by almost all the sovereigns of Europe; and, after the way was thoroughly cleared, and the people sufficiently undeceived, Voltaire sent Madame Calas to Paris to demand justice of the King, against the parliament of Toulouse; and the decree, which had destroyed her husband, and covered her family and her children with shame, after having been inquired into by a council of forty members, was disannulled in the most public manner.

Madame Calas, on this ordinance being promulgated, was surrounded by crowds of people, who blessed Voltaire, and shed tears of sympathy; and the liberality of the King, the generosity of the Princes and Ministers, and in particular of the Duke of Choiseul, and of twenty persons of distinction, repaired, as much as was possible, the misfortunes of Calas. Every act of justice in this case, must have made the parliament of Toulouse tremble, whenever they were obliged, in future, to pronounce a decree of condemnation.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILST the proceedings in the case of Calas were pending, Voltaire was engaged in two works, that equally did honour to the cause of freedom of opinion, and the welfare of mankind. These were his *Treatise on Toleration*, and his *Philosophical Dictionary*. This last is a book of facts and anecdotes, in which much information is blended with instruction. The clergy, however, exclaimed against it as injurious to the Christian religion; but it may be permitted to doubt whether the execution of Calas was not a greater stain upon religion than any part of this dictionary. Indeed it influenced some inconsiderate young men, of strong passions, to speak openly against religion, and to attribute to its doctrines, the evils which only arise from its abuse.

Amongst the number of the unthinking persons who were most notorious for their licentious con-

versation, we may remark the Chevalier de la Barre, D'Etalonde, Saveuse, Maillefer, and a boy called Moinel, who was only in his fourteenth year. The judge of Abbeville, enraged at their tumultuous and blasphemous proceedings, commenced a criminal action against them. D'Etalonde, Saveuse, and Maillefer, saved themselves by flight. The Chevalier de la Barre, nephew of the Abbess of Abbeville, was seized. The age of this young officer, which was that of inexperience, and a time of life at which he could not be expected to be acquainted with law and the consequences of impiety; his talents, which gave much promise of future eminence; the services of his grandfather, who had been a general officer, all spoke in his behalf, and pleaded his pardon. The judges of Ponthieu, however, only listened to their zeal, which was not that of the Gospel; and they condemned him to have his hands, his tongue and his nose cut off, and to be thrown into a fiery furnace.

The parliament of Paris ratified this decree, which it ought to have disannulled; and also condemned the *Philosophical Dictionary* to the same

punishment ; as if it had been an accomplice in the misdeeds of the young officer. On searching his property, this book was found, with the *Thérèse Philosophe*, a work as indecent as it was revolting ; the judges, burnt the former, but pardoned the latter.

After the Counsellors of the Tournelle had authorized the arrest of La Barre, and the *Philosophical Dictionary*, they also talked of seizing Voltaire, who was accused of being its author. But the majority of voices in the council-chamber was against this measure, and thus the author escaped the chance of being roasted alive. It would have been difficult, indeed, to have proved him to be the author ; but when bigots are agitated by a false spirit of religion, they do not wait for proofs to punish their victims.

Voltaire soon took his revenge upon the parliament ; he announced himself as the advocate of the Chevalier de la Barre, and instituted an inquiry into his condemnation before the public. And, on examination of the witnesses and proceedings, he was declared innocent by the public, who, disgusted at the cruelty of the con-

demnation, agreed that he had been sufficiently punished by being shut up six months in a convent.

In a short time after this, Voltaire produced *Les Questions de Zapata*, *Saul*, *Lettres sur les Miracles*, *La Mort de Socrates*, *Le Diner du Comte de Boulainvilliers*, *Le Philosophe Ignorant*, *Le Cri des Nations*, *La Paix Perpétuelle*, *Lettres d'Amabed*, *E'pître aux Romains*, *Homélies du Pasteur Brown*, *Les Colimaçons du Frère l'Escarboutier*, *l'ABC*. The object of all these were the same; but the forms varied so much, that, in reading them, they have each the charm of novelty. An attentive observer of what was then passing in France, might perceive a determined struggle between philosophy and prejudice, and Voltaire appeared in every form; sometimes concealed and sometimes openly. As a man of letters, he was, during this time, amusing his readers with different productions; and whilst he was attempting to strangle the monster superstition, he gave the tragedies of *Olympia*, *of Shytes*, *Du Triumvirate*, *Des Guébres*, *Les Romans du Haron*, et de la *Princesse de Babylone*, which may be fairly classed among the best of his works.

About this period appeared the *Belisarius* of

Marmontel, which he had composed with the same design as Voltaire, after having published his *Tales*, which had gained him some reputation as an author. The Sorbonne, which was not tolerant, cited Marmontel and *Belisarius* to their tribunal; and, whilst the King of Poland, and Catherine II., were translating it, the Sorbonne was tormenting its author with their persecutions, and *Belisarius* was proscribed by the Archbishop of Paris in his diocese. Authors were, however, at that time too much habituated to such treatment, to be much affected by it; and Voltaire, who had formerly defended Montesquieu, and his *Spirit of Laws*, now exerted himself for Marmontel and *Belisarius*. The archbishop and his mandate, the Sorbonne and their censure, in bad Latin, were subjects for his ridicule; a weapon which no individual has hitherto handled with better success.

But he was now attacked by the Abbé Guenet and Rousseau. The former accused him of ignorance of historical facts, and the latter of a disbelief in God. The one antagonist he attempted

to refute upon his own ground; and to render the other ridiculous by his poem of *The War of Geneva*. The Bishop of Annecy was much grieved when he saw Voltaire among the number of his diocesans, regarding him only in the light of an enemy to the church and to religion. There were also many other disputes between the prelate and the philosopher. The bishop was very angry that he had rebuilt the church of Ferney without consulting him, and also because he lectured his parishioners in this same church, and regarded his sermons as an usurpation of his own sacerdotal rights, and his complaints soon reached Versailles. The Archbishop of Paris, Christophe de Beaumont, also joined, though with more moderation, the cries of the Prelate of Savoy, until the appearance of the letter of Milord Cantorbery to Christophe de Beaumont, in which he saw himself, his mandate, and his religion, turned into ridicule; he then gave full indulgence to his spleen.

Queen Marie Luzenski was at the point of death, and M. de Beaumont addressed her in behalf of the religion, which nourished her hopes,

and entreated her influence against Voltaire, who occupied himself in jesting on the holy scriptures, its martyrdoms, and its ministers. At the point of death the sufferer is happy to place confidence in whatever can afford comfort to an uncertain existence, or confirm his future hopes. The mind, like the body, is weakened by illness; and one of the characteristics of weakness is to adopt upon the credit of others, opinions of which we are ourselves in search, but of which we are unable to ascertain the correctness. Indeed, the death-bed repentance of many sinners may be attributed more to weakness and outward distress, affecting their minds, than to any inward, or sincere, contrition; otherwise, we should see more lead a new life, while they have the power of amending what is passed; and it is a lamentable fact, that words, in matters of religion, have had almost as great weight with bigots as deeds; indeed money has often lent apparent security to the soul, when sincere repentance might have proved unavailing.

The mind of the Queen had been, in this instance, so much excited, that when Louis XV.

came into her room, she talked of religion, and demanded vengeance against the individual who had turned it into ridicule. The King was in a state of uncertainty as to his proceedings. Voltaire, informed of what the prelate had effected, was preparing to retire to Stutgard, to the Prince of Wurtemberg. Fear prevailed over every other consideration; so that, while arrangements were making for his departure, he burnt a square foot of papers, and discarded all his servants, except his secretary, and Father Adam, who would not abandon him. A secret delight, however, mingled with his fears, when he understood, that the letter of Milord Cantorbery had caused all this disturbance.

New complaints arrived from the Bishop of Annecy to the court, which served to increase the storm. This clergyman publicly accused Voltaire of not believing in Jesus Christ; and the philosopher only replied to this charge by pretending sickness; receiving the sacrament, and sending for a capuchin to confess him: he then made a profession of faith, which was witnessed

and signed by several individuals, and preached a sermon against thieving to his parishioners, in consequence of his having been robbed of a cow. Such actions, however, served only to inflame the zeal of the bishop more, and he had again recourse to complaints. Louis, tired out with these religious disputes, and anxious to oblige the Queen, promised to banish Voltaire, but delayed issuing the orders for its execution.

The Queen, in the mean time, died; affairs changed; and the storm subsided; but the *History of the Parliament of Paris*, which appeared at that time, threw Voltaire into a new embarrassment. He had, with reason, many complaints against this parliament; for having interfered, for instance, with the representation of *Mahomet*, of which tragedy the Pope had notified his approval; for having been the instrument of the condemnation of *De la Barre*, and for having burnt many of his own works; it was this parliament also that consigned to the flames *l'Homme à Quarante Écus*, and a member of the parliament had, in the ardour of his zeal, exclaimed, "Are we only to burn books?"

None of these grievances, however, were alluded to in the present work ; and we should not guess the author to have had such causes of complaint ; he merely combated certain opinions relative to the constitution, and the inequality and badness of the representation, contrasting it with the English. However, the excellence of the writing might have made up for the novelty of the sentiments ; the author was threatened with punishment, and obliged to disavow it in the public papers. The parliament, finding their views impeded, declared war against all the philosophers ; and, in their rage, condemned the *Encyclopædia*, and prevented the re-impression of a work which had done the greatest honour to France. The copies of the old edition were seized, consigned to the Bastille, and the bookseller ruined.

Voltaire, in reply to the first act of hostility, announced a fresh work of the same name. People imagined this was only the conceit of an old man ; but a year had hardly elapsed, when four volumes were circulated throughout Europe. The parliament was furious. Mr. Seguier, the attorney-general, burnt all the books on this subject,

which he could find ; and declared war against all the disciples of the new school. The members adjourned to submit the business to further consideration, when they were attacked by the chancellor, who asserted, that they were infringing on the authority of the crown. The parliament protested, but Louis XV. dissolved it, and thus accidentally saved the philosophers. Voltaire, on this occasion, exerted himself in support of the royal authority ; and what he then said was very much regarded ; it was, however, no more than what he had written thirty years before. But the minds of people had been insensibly prepared to receive truths, which only gain ground by degrees ; and when we consider the monstrous and absurd opinions of former days, we must be struck with the changes which our present notions must undergo hereafter. The world was, for ages, unenlightened by a religion, which, though it has made its progress through seas of blood, and been perverted in its course by the waywardness of the human mind, has at last begun to shine with a more steady beam, and will

doubtless every day proceed in its glorious career. The errors have been detected, and the dross of human opinion removed from the precious ore of divine revelation.

A short time before the dissolution of the parliament, whilst his writings were daily sentenced to the flames, whilst the cries of the clergy were loudest against him, and the court was teased with the complaints of the bishops of Paris and Annecy, his friends, as I have before observed, had the courage to raise a statue to his memory. This has been the manner in which Greece and Rome were wont to commemorate men, who were persecuted for their religious opinions. In modern times, Erasmus was the first on whom this honour was conferred. His image was erected, whilst he was still living, and whilst the displeasure of the clergy against him was most violent; it was accordingly put down soon afterwards, owing to the influence of the monks, who made him an honourable distinction, which had been justly carried subservient to their private views and blind prejudices.

The money requisite for the expenses of the statue

of Voltaire was soon procured; and it is worthy of remark, that it was entirely conducted by men of his own nation. The inscription on the pedestal indicated that it was a statue erected to Voltaire, by friends who were his fellow-countrymen. Another circumstance is worthy of record; namely, that a priest was the first who gave the plan of the work, and subscribed to its completion. Men of fortune and high rank, who had only these adventitious circumstances in their recommendation, were excluded from any participation in the honour. An exception was, however, made in favour of a few foreigners, who solicited permission. The King of Prussia referred to d'Alembert the mention of the sum he should subscribe, who replied in the name of the academy, "Sir, your name alone, and a crown, are sufficient."

Whilst Pigal, one of the first artists in Europe, was engaged with this statue, the enthusiasm which the works of Voltaire excited inflamed many literary societies, who, not being able publicly to inaugurate a statue to his memory, determined on it privately. The most splendid assembly for this purpose was held at the house of Ma-

demoiselle Clairon. This young lady had become celebrated by her wit and social virtues, as well as from having attracted great notice on the stage by her superior talents for acting. She assembled on this occasion those who were the most distinguished for their talents. After a splendid repast, they ranged themselves in a circle, in a room prepared for the occasion, and Mademoiselle Clairon, habited as a priestess of Apollo, holding laurels in her hand, and seated on a throne, recited an ode in honour of Voltaire. When the priestess, herself in tears, pronounced the verses, which recalled to mind the moment when the learned must lose their leader, and the wretched their protector, the audience were melted into tears. The associations of the past, the present, and the future, rushed to their recollection, and the rivalry of genius, as well as the emulation of friendship, sunk deep into every bosom, when they contrasted the probable existence of the statue with the life of the man whom they envied and adored. They considered that against death there is no remedy; that the grave must receive the offspring

of mortality; and that the brightest genius would soon be as cold as the marble in which he must inevitably be enclosed.

It has been asserted, that Louis XV. disliked Voltaire; facts, however, appear against this supposition. He once observed to some courtiers, who were jesting in his presence on these ceremonies; "I can easily imagine this enthusiasm." They were from that moment silent. A short time after, when he was hesitating whether he should arrest Voltaire, they told him of the intention his friends had of erecting a statue to his memory. "He deserves it; but where will they place it?" "Sir," replied the young Lavallière, "I am pretty sure I know where they will not place it. It will neither be at the gate of the Sorbonne, nor in the chamber of your parliament." "You are right," replied the King, "it would not remain long in either of those places." Another anecdote is also related, which tends to shew, that the King was not ill-disposed to Voltaire. The bishops, after one of their sittings, in which they had condemned several of his works, went to Versailles, according to the usual custom,

to pay their respects to the King, and to solicit his protection, in behalf of their religion, against the philosophers.—The King promised, as usual, to watch over it with fidelity. Some days after, hearing of the good the author of the *Henriade* did among his tenantry, he asked if his pension had been regularly paid; upon which he learned that, for fourteen years, he had never received any. “I request,” said he, “that in future, this account may be regularly discharged.”

His behaviour, with regard to Voltaire, has been thought as inconsistent, and difficult to estimate aright. Perhaps he considered it his duty as a King, not publicly to countenance, one, whom, as a man and a philosopher, he respected and admired.

We now come to a period, when Voltaire was principally engaged in defending the unhappy and unprotected; among these we must include the fifteen thousand slaves of the monks of Saint Claude, whom he contributed to render free and happy. Europe was for a long time infested with these poor wretches, who, attached to the glebe, were scarcely treated as well as horses; and, although

their masters had not the power of putting them to death by the sword, yet they could cause them to expire under the torture of the rod. This sort of slavery, which was always equally revolting to nature, and true policy, had been abolished in France under the third race of its kings; but still existed in nearly its original state on Mount Jura, in the county of Burgundy.

The inhabitants of these mountains, in mortmain to the monks of St. Claude, were subject to the worst and most unnatural customs. One of them was, that a wife, after the first six months of her marriage, could not sleep out of her paternal residence, under the penalty of losing all right of inheritance; and whatever property her parents possessed, devolved to the monks, who were also entitled to the possessions of those who died without direct heirs. The abominable custom of the *Veillée du Mouchon* was the consequence of this practice. The heads of families, fearing to let their goods pass to the church, made sure of an heir before they allowed their children to marry. As soon as a boy and girl, had attained a sufficient age, and the connexion

for life was approved, arrangements were made for their future subsistence, and the parents left them together in the same room, after having placed a piece of fir-wood lighted in the fire-place of the apartment. This ceremony was called *planter le Mouchon**. They then retired, and the young couple were allowed to remain together during the time the wood took for consumption.

The experiment generally proved successful, and the lady, in due time, became pregnant, and was then married; but if, on the contrary, Providence did not smile on their endeavours, lover succeeded lover until the desired effect was produced. This custom, contrary to the canonical laws, is calculated to deprive a lover and a husband of an acquisition in matrimony, which, though the most uncertain among the attributes of a wife, is the one which is most regarded by her husband. There were very few boys or girls, who, after having planted *le Mouchon*, would not be ready to join again in the ceremony

* This expression had its derivation from the Valley of Mouchon, where the custom originated.

without solicitation. The inhabitants and communities of Mount Jura expected, that the Benedictines of St. Claude, having become prebendaries, would use their privileges with moderation: in this, however, they were deceived. The executions were raised to a height that excited the indignation of all the deputies.

Those who suffered, proceeded to throw themselves at the feet of Voltaire, and to implore his assistance against the tyranny of the children of the church. The philosopher, aware that the pretended privileges of these holy men were usurped, addressed a petition to the King, in which he shewed, that those whom he was pleased to style his children, ought not to be treated by the clergy as brutes. This memorial, which was written with eloquence, excited attention. The petitions of the slaves were sent to the Council of *Dépêches*; and the Marquis of Montignard, minister of war, was authorized to inquire into the circumstances.

Voltaire sent Mr. Christin to Paris to support the cause of liberty, which, however, encountered strong opposition; it was first maintained that the

complaints and petitions were entirely judicial, and ought to be submitted to the consideration of the parliament of Besançon. Voltaire replied, that the right of emancipation, like that of naturalization, was an act of sovereignty, and that the King alone was possessed of its exercise. They then objected, that the right of mortmain existed still in several lordships of France, and that a private law, which would particularly apply to the serfs of Mount Jura, could not be granted, and that a general one would cause unlimited dissatisfaction.

Voltaire was not, however, discouraged; he solicited the law, and the Chancellor Maupeou promised it; but the dismissal of the old parliament, and the formation of the new, hindered his proceeding to fulfil his obligation. The case, however, was laid before the parliament of Besançon; and the chapter of Saint Claude was condemned to restore all they had taken from the house of a young woman, while she was occupied in celebrating the funeral of her father; and the subsequent edict of Louis XVI. paved the way for its total abolition.

During the time that Voltaire was occupied with these affairs, he had his apartments, which were used for acting plays, changed into shops for artists. The dissensions, which had torn Geneva for fifteen years, and caused commerce to languish, had, in 1776, proceeded so far, as even to cause open tumults in the streets. Many were shot in these broils, and those who did not wish to interfere on either side, left the town. Voltaire, however, detained many of the most industrious, and prevented them from removing their talents out of the country. Those who remained in his house found whatever was necessary supplied by his generosity, and he soon established a considerable manufactory for watches.

Under these circumstances, he formed the plan for the establishment of the town of Versoi, upon the lake of Geneva. The Duke de Choiseul embraced the project with eagerness. The situation of the town was as advantageous as it was picturesque. The workmen were from Ferney, where Voltaire had formed a small colony, and built them agreeable and commodious houses; and this village, which had originally been inhabited by a

few wretched peasants, who were brutalized by ignorance and dirt, was soon peopled by artisans in easy circumstances, and good watchmakers, whose exertions have since attained celebrity. If Voltaire had lived a few years longer, he would have seen the town acquire the character of opulence. The following inscription, which the Abbé Belloni had already prepared, was intended for its principal gate-way:

“ In Volteriopolim,
Sumptibus has propriis struxit Voltarius ædes,
Hic effudit opes dum scriptis edocet urbem ;
Mœnia si starent vatis dum scripta manebunt,
Urbi æterna fores æternum nomen haberes.”

It has been already observed, that the parliament of Toulouse, bewildered by the cries of a superstitious mob, caused the old and innocent Calas to expire under the hand of the executioner; and that the parliament of Paris sacrificed the Chevalier de la Barre, a promising young officer, merely for some youthful indiscretions; rendering the punishment of licentiousness equal to that of parricide, or arson.

But it is the task of the biographer to consider

the errors and mistakes under which the judges of the tribunals laboured, and the service which Voltaire rendered to mankind by their detection. The same false zeal which had persecuted Calas and De la Barre, induced the magistrates of the village of Mazanet, in Languedoc, to pass sentence of death upon Sirven, a feudist of Castres. The charge they laid against him was the horrible crime of having drowned his daughter, who, it afterwards appeared, had cast herself in a moment of frenzy into a pit of water. Sirven and the whole family made their escape. His wife, unable to bear the fatigues of the journey, soon sunk under the weight of her misfortunes, and one of his daughters gave birth to a child in the midst of the snow on the mountains of the Cevennes. Those of the family who escaped from the severity of the weather, took refuge near the residence of Voltaire, which was the asylum for the wretched, and threw their persons at his feet, and their poverty on his bounty. Their misfortunes touched him, and he engaged the Kings of Prussia, of Denmark, and of Poland, in their cause, as well as the Empress of Russia, and se-

veral others of high rank and great influence. For nearly ten months Voltaire solicited the reversal of the decree respecting Sirven; and though he had innumerable obstacles to overcome, his perseverance triumphed.

When Louis XV, had called another parliament to replace the one that caused Calas to be burnt, Voltaire pleaded the cause before them, and a decree in his favour was a stain of disgrace upon the former judges, who were condemned to pay the expenses of the proceedings. The whole family returned to Ferney, and thanked Voltaire, with tears of joy; and this compensation of justice consoled him for some unpleasant circumstances which he experienced in his colony for artists; and he observes in a letter, " My manufactories were only a work of supererogation; but the affairs of Sirven were of the first necessity."

The judges of that time were in the constant habit of committing errors, in the most important decisions. The judge of a village upon the confines of Barois, on the most doubtful proofs, condemned a labourer of the name of Martin, to be broke on the wheel, as guilty of theft and as-

sassination. The criminal court of Paris, who had delegated their power to this judge, examined the proceedings carelessly, and put their mark of approval to the sentence. The poor man was sent back to the village to be executed. A short time after, another man was capitally convicted for robbery, and, before his death, pleaded guilty to the crimes for which Martin had been murdered. The judges merely acknowledged their mistakes, without offering to make any reparation for the crimes they had committed; nor, indeed, was there, at that time, any superior tribunal, by which their conduct could be censured.

Such arbitrary authority must be considered as dangerous to the human race; and a thousand voices ought to have sounded the trumpet of reform in the common cause. Voltaire exerted himself on the death of this unhappy man: but his writings were circulated slowly; and not having been printed with the permission of the government, they reached Paris too late to produce the desired effect. Had the matter been otherwise, they might have awakened justice, which was slum-

bering on the judgment-seat, and prevented the sentence of condemnation of the judges of Arras against Mont Baille, who was a good, though obscure citizen of Saint Omer, and a gardener by occupation. The mother of this unfortunate man, who was in the habit of drinking spirits, was suffocated by the breaking of a blood-vessel; but the cries of a tumultuous mob accused her son and his wife of having strangled her. There were no circumstances to create suspicion; indeed, presumptive evidence was in their favour; for, by the death of his mother, the son lost a small employment which afforded his family subsistence.

The judges of Saint Omer having no proofs against them, but yielding to the clamours of the people, condemned the young couple to remain in prison for a year, in order to secure what they termed a more full investigation. The sovereign Council of Arras, before whom the trial of Mont Baille was brought, caused the husband, who asserted his ignorance to the last breath, to be broken on the wheel; his wife was also sentenced to the same punishment; but, being

pregnant, they waited until she was brought to bed to put the sentence into execution. Voltaire received intelligence of this in time; and, on the cause being again examined, the wife, who expected nothing less than death, was reprieved, and the character of her husband cleared from the guilty imputation.

No redress, however, could be obtained; and thus one man had the power of assassinating others, under the pretence of law, and could do the same under the same pretence, if they were accused of injustice, or oppression. After having effectually established the character of an obscure citizen, and saved the life of one, whose husband had suffered martyrdom, Voltaire interested himself in a political defence for the Count de Lally, whom the parliament had caused to be dragged, like a common malefactor, with a gag in his mouth, to the place of execution; a mode of treatment which was not legal, and which a special command from the king could alone authorize.

The Count de Lally, as a private officer, had distinguished himself at the battle of Fontenoy, and

Louis XV., who was a witness to his bravery, made him a brigadier after the engagement. The following year Lally formed a plan for a descent on England; and if Prince Edward had not been defeated, he was to have had an office of high command under the Duke of Richelieu.

In the year 1755, he was sent to India, in order to ameliorate, if possible, the affairs of France, which then appeared in a desperate state, as far as regarded their settlements in Asia. He was fixed upon for the command, because he was known to be an active and intelligent man. The distinction of his first appearance induced Louis XV. to appoint him commander-in-chief of the expedition. His efforts, however, were not well seconded; and the minister omitted for a considerable time to furnish him with supplies. The merchants of Pondicherry also, occupied with their commercial views, interfered a good deal with his arrangements; and his army was turbulent, and badly disciplined. The loss of d'Estaing, who had been made prisoner at the siege of Madras, and who united the coolness and intelligence of a great commander, with the audacious intrepidity

of a common soldier, was another of the evils he experienced. The English had been reinforced with troops and money, and the two last years that the French remained in India, were a series of continued calamities. The parliament of Paris was charged with the judgment of Lally, who himself was desirous of being tried by a court-martial of military officers, capable of appreciating his conduct. This, however, was refused, and being found guilty of want of duty in his charge, and of being the cause of the loss of Pondicherry, he was beheaded.

Voltaire, who had considered the subject, secluded in his retreat, could not persuade himself that a general officer of the most upright character, and one who was an enemy to the English, would have betrayed the interests of his King, and of his countrymen, in the manner which had been represented. He examined the conduct of Lally, his defence, and the charges of the accusers, together with some of the pieces on which they founded the proofs of the crime of which he was accused. In most of these, he only found errors that the general had not the power of avoiding,

and in none of them crimes which could deserve the punishment he experienced. Two things, also, materially prepossessed Voltaire in his favour. The one was, that, all the witnesses brought against him, were men of no consideration, or respectability, and some of them not even known to possess any character. The second was, that the memorial, which the attorney-general made use of to denounce M. de Lally, was the work of a monk, who was unworthy of belief, and a truly bad character. What other term can be applied to the Jesuit Lavour, sent to reform the infidels, and who, instead of so doing, intermeddled with the Christians, who solicited a pension of six hundred francs to go and live as he called it, and die in the retreat of Perigord ; and who, after his death, was found to be possessed of a million of money in diamonds, and bills of credit. In the same case which contained this property was found the memorial against Lally.

Voltaire, in his history of this unfortunate war in India, exposed facts with impartiality ; and neither lessened the character of M. de Lally, nor extenuated his faults, nor impeached the character of

the enemies he made by the impetuosity of his character; and, in undeceiving a populace, who were then calmed, but who are as difficult to be undeceived, as they are easy to be imposed upon, he left to Count de Lally Tollendal the task of obtaining judges for his father, and of proving his innocence to all Europe.

The magistrates were much displeased at the active interference of Voltaire with their sentences of condemnation; this, however, he only did when they were deceived, and exposed fellow-citizens to an unjust punishment. The death of an innocent man, murdered under the pretence of law, is a crime against the community. In England every individual may defend his cause and his life in public; but each nation has its own peculiar laws. Voltaire thought that the criminal code of his country was defective, and all that he wrote on that subject tended to make the people desirous of a reformation.

The Count de Morvengies was another of those for whom Voltaire exerted himself. This general officer was ensnared in the nets of sharpers, and was seized and thrown into prison for debt.

The sum was laid at a hundred thousand francs, which, however, in reality, he did not owe, but which the judge of the case sentenced him to pay. The Count had considerable property in lands and in forests, but he had also large debts, and was in immediate want of money. Some usurers promised to advance him the amount; and, under pretence of accelerating the business, they persuaded him to give bills for three hundred thousand francs, of which, when they got possession, they boldly declared they had given him the full value.

To persuade the public of the truth of this, they fabricated a ridiculous story; asserting, that a woman, named Veron, eighty-six years of age, who lived in a garret, had supplied the money, and that her grandson, one Jonquières, had conveyed it in thirteen different parcels, to the Count de Morvengies, who lived at the distance of near a league from Madame Veron. Voltaire heard of this strange law-suit, and read the memoirs of both parties. The regulations of commerce were against the accused; for when a bill is delivered, the money is supposed to have been received; but

the contradictions on the part of the lenders left no doubt in the mind of the philosopher, that the loan of the hundred thousand francs was a fabrication. Accordingly, with M. Linguet, he cleared the honour and fortune of M. de Morvengies, and the parliament declared M. Jonquières to be a cheat and an usurer.

“There are some men,” observes Rochefoucault, “who would not dare to appear enemies of virtue; but when they wish to persecute, they deny its existence.” This was the case with the enemies of Voltaire; they attributed all he did to the motive of vanity. He only delights, say they, in gaining renown for his actions. His prevailing passion is to hear himself spoken of, and his great talent is to choose his opportunities for action skilfully. The charitable persons who judged so, certainly did not know, or affected not to know, that every man in distress applied to his bounty; that he delighted in assisting the wretched, in whatever class of life they might be placed; and that, in the obscurity of his retreat, he was perpetually performing good actions.

A fact, that is little known, but one that de-

serves to be more so, upon the authority of Duvernet, is, that he rescued from the hands of the Jesuits the estate of six gentlemen of the name of Crassi; several of whom were minors. The scarcity of the times, and the expenses which the military service requires in time of war, had obliged them to borrow money, and make over their property to their creditors. Several of these were Genevoise and Jesuits. The reverend Father Tesse, their rector, applied to the council in the name of the Society of Jesus, to reimburse all the other creditors. This put him in their place, and gave him the right of making away with the property of the plaintiffs, and reducing them to poverty. Father Tesse was just on the point of completing this holy purpose, when Voltaire interfered. Upon hearing of the case, he sent the whole money to the registrar of Gex, which was due to the creditors of these gentlemen. This stratagem, practised upon the Jesuits, but particularly upon Father Tesse, was one of the actions which most delighted the mind of the philosopher. It was similar to the rescue of six lambs from the jaws of a wolf. He had also the

satisfaction of seeing every thing regularly arranged in the family ; and that, at the destruction of the Jesuits, they were in a state to buy all their property, and to make a house of their college.

We may also relate another action, which, perhaps, would never have been divulged, had not those who were its object made it public. A labourer, who was not his own vassal, had lost a lawsuit at the parliament of Besançon, which completely ruined him. In his despair, he came with his wife, to implore the charity of Voltaire, who enjoyed, all over France, a character for liberality ; and the assistance he wanted was to have the decision set aside. Voltaire, affected by his story, took the papers of the proceedings, and delivered them to M. Christin, his steward ; who, after having given them a careful perusal, was of opinion, that these unhappy people had lost a good cause, and that the nullity of the proceedings left hope in an appeal. At this intelligence he went into his study, and returned, bearing in the lap of his dressing-gown three bags of a thousand francs each. “ There,” said he to the unfortunate labourer, “ is something to compensate

you for the wrongs you have suffered in a court of justice; a fresh law-suit would be a source of new trouble to you ; and, if you are wise, you will go to law no more. If you wish to establish yourself on my property, I will take charge of you."

These anecdotes are related by Duvernet, and agreed to by Condorcet, though hardly noticed by Mr. Lepan. It is, however, the duty of a just writer to mingle the praises due to liberality even with the austere condemnation of religious prejudice.

CHAPTER X.

THE beneficence of the philosopher had, to a certain degree, made him the tutelar genius of the place; and the veneration with which he inspired his followers was general. Whenever he walked out he was surrounded by clients, who showered upon him their blessings. Labourers might be sometimes seen returning from their work, and kneeling before his mausoleum, like Mahometans before that of their prophet; and if his fame had been as extensive as that of Theseus or Hercules, he would have enjoyed a translation to divinity. "If he procures our freedom," said the inhabitants of Mount Jura, "we will tear St. Claude from his niche, and put his statue in the place." When he was made acquainted with their desire, Voltaire replied, "Tell these honest people, that I thank them, but there is no hurry."

Amidst all the occupations of establishing manufactures, and assisting the cause of those in distress,

he had time left to instruct and amuse his contemporaries ; and, it was in these years of multiplied toils, that he produced the tragedy of *The Law of Minos*, and a number of smaller pieces ; in which vivacity and good taste are blended with philosophy and morality.

At the court of Louis XV., in 1773 and 1774, all was managed by party manœuvres and intrigue ; and the courtiers took little interest in the good which Voltaire performed, or the knowledge which he disseminated. They enjoyed the benefits of the sun, if the expression may be permitted, without knowing the true value of its splendour ; and if, owing to any partial obscurity, it was the topic of conversation, mention was only made of the spots upon its surface. The favours, however, of the sovereign of the north, made up to him for the disappointments and neglect which he experienced at the Court of Versailles.

Catherine II., who was a great legislator, and appears to have completed what was begun by the Czar Peter the Great, before she mounted the throne, and while she was yet in a secluded station, imbibed much of the spirit, and many of the opinions, found in the works of the philosopher of Fer-

ney. As soon as she was Empress she realized some of the philosophical views of Voltaire in Russia ; and it was this woman who wrote with her own hand the three words, "Destruction to Persecutors." The moral forms a lesson to nations.

Prince Kostlowski, accompanied by Mr. Presbassenski, an officer of the guards of Catherine II., had an order to repair to Ferney. They presented themselves in the name of their sovereign, with the letters which she wrote to the philosopher, and papers which contained the rules, according to which twenty lawgivers were engaged in forming a code of laws that was to govern ten different nations, which were under her sway. A box of ivory, which she had worked with her own hands, some precious furs, her portrait, and twenty large diamonds, accompanied this homage, which the discernment of the female sovereign of the Russias publicly tendered to the talents of the French philosopher. In proportion as those in power are enlightened, their minds gain energy, and they more easily appreciate the value of a man so rare and so unparalleled.

The attentions he received, on the other hand, from Frederic, were of a different kind ; but not less

flattering in their way. It was a present from a king who had been in strict habits of correspondence and intimacy with a philosopher. He caused a statue of Voltaire to be made in his best manufactory of porcelain, and wrote beneath with his own hand the two expressive words, *Viro Immortali*. The answer Voltaire gave to this was equally complimentary : “ Sire, you give me an estate in your dominions*.” When some visitors at Ferney were remarking its elegance, and paying the owner some compliments on the interpretation of the motto, he said, “ It is the signature of the donor†.”

Voltaire was at this period the wonder and admiration of Europe. His writings, which were disseminated every where, almost universally extended the use of the French language. All the artists, sculptors, medallists, and painters were occupied in taking his likeness, and varied his form under every appearance, and in every attitude. No man ever before enjoyed, at the same time, such constant and universal respect. There were many, who from

* Sire, vous me donnez une terre dans vos domaines.

† Cest la signature de celui qui me l'envoie.

malice and envy, attempted to blacken his fame, and his character. Pere Viret accused him of being in love with Catherine II., and addicted to the pleasures of women in his eighty-third year ! The Abbé de Mabli accused him, in a most eloquent manner, of not being able to see farther than his nose ; and Mr. Duval d'E'premenil asserted that he was without property, before the parliament of Rouen. Among others, who have written the most inconsiderately against Voltaire, are the Abbé Sabattier, de Castres, Madame de Genlis, and Fréron. The last, however, candidly confessed, " If I did not slander him, nobody would read my pages*."

It was now the time that young Louis XVI. assumed the reins of government, and consoled the French by his wisdom and moderation, whilst the Sage of Ferney, from his retirement, applauded the actions of the new monarch. Louis XVI., at the age of twenty, was astonished, and, perhaps, alarmed, at finding himself King. The art of governing appeared quite unknown to him ; his grandfather, Louis XV., having always impeded his acquaintance

* Si je n'en dirais pas de mal, on ne lirait pas mes feuilles.

with state matters. The first step he took on ascending the throne was marked by wisdom ; he recalled to court the Count de Maurepas, who had been for a long time in disgrace. France, which, at first, was alarmed at a new government, imagined it had now hopes of enjoying a prosperous one ; and its wishes were not deceived. The administration of the treasury, full of disorder in every branch, was mangled by the Abbé Terray, who retired from Paris loaded with public disapprobation. The Chevalier Mausséou was exiled and forgotten ; the Marshal de May was made minister of foreign affairs ; the management of the navy was under the care of M. de Sartine ; and M. Turgot was comptroller-general. The former parliament was recalled ; but the literary world had no reason to complain of Mausséou, the President. Although this parliament was attacked by a thousand different satires, none of the authors were denounced or accused of impiety. Upon one occasion a magistrate exclaimed, that philosophy undermined the throne ; a prediction which was in the sequel too awfully fulfilled. The wife of one of the new magistrates had the folly to receive a hundred louis from a petitioner, to obtain for him an audience with her husband,

which was granted, but in a very rude manner; this occasioned a law-suit between the judges and the client; the result of which gave rise to the recall of the former parliament.

It was expected that its members, who had suffered a long exile, would have profited by this period of disgrace and inactivity; and that, improved by reflection and information, they would act differently. To the great joy of Paris they resumed their functions; but to the great discontent of all who were interested in the progress of knowledge, they renewed their attacks upon the literati. There were two philosophers in the ministry, M. de Malesherbes and M. Turgot. These men, during their leisure hours, amused themselves with entering into the views of the economists, who were engaged with the amelioration of commerce and agriculture; as also with repairing the errors, which, under the preceding reign, had been introduced into the administration of the finances. To establish a free trade in corn was one of the first operations of M. Turgot; and the price of bread was immediately lowered. The taxes upon articles of necessary consumption were rendered much more moderate; by which the King lost nothing,

because the demand for provisions was increased. *La Caisse de Poissy*, which was proclaimed by many as usurious, and a burthen upon the people, was immediately suppressed, and the price of meat was diminished one sou the pound. Labourers and peasants were no longer compelled to make new roads; and the statutes were laid, by a proportionate tax, equally upon all classes of citizens.

This reform, which of itself alone deserved the greatest praise, made him a number of enemies among the nobility, the magistracy and the clergy, the wardens and corporations, which shackle industry, and are so ruinous to those who have recourse to them, and an interminable quantity of law-suits were abolished. A still more abundant source of law-suits is to be found in the rights of feudal tenure. M. Turgot formed a project for their abolition. He also attempted to take off the duties on salt. He wished to reform the economy of the royal household, which had been so often prayed for in the petitions of the parliament, and which M. Necker had finally the courage to perform.

Voltaire, who loved the state, the King, and M. Turgot, and whose views were those of a philosopher,

wrote three small poems, *Le Temps Présent*, *Les Finances*, and *Sésostris*, applauding the prudent measures of the new reign. The last is an agreeable allegory, in which the bard of Henry IV. celebrates the wisdom of his descendant. Voltaire took advantage of the momentary favour he held at court, to obtain the suppression of the excise, to which the country of Gex was then subject; and for this he was principally indebted to M. Turgot. The influence of the minister was, however, on the decline. The parliament opposed him, and burnt some writings of Voltaire in his praise; whilst his friends supported him in an intemperate manner, and spoke of the parliament with open contempt.

M. Turgot was accused of having written *Le Monarque Accompli*, a heavy and voluminous work, addressed to the Emperor Joseph II., in which it was imagined there were revolutionary doctrines. Complaints were made to the King, who, perpetually harassed by the perfidious representations of the enemies of the minister, commissioned the Baron D'Ogny to ascertain the opinion of the people in general. A number of false petitions were handed to him, which he was led to believe contained

the general sense of his subjects, and M. Turgot was dismissed.

Malesherbes was desirous of following his friend into retreat, and the same day gave in his resignation of the department of Paris. The retirement of these two men gave Voltaire much uneasiness. He testified his concern in a small tract, entitled, *E'pître à un Homme*. The subject was M. Turgot, who must, no doubt, have been much flattered by such a mention. The disgrace of the economists soon followed that of the minister. An action was instituted against him for having said that the caisse of Poissy was usurious. He came to the châtelet, pleaded his cause himself, and gained the suit. His cause was that of the people; who, after judgment had been passed, reconducted him home amidst shouts of applause.

This triumph, however, was not of long duration. The government banished him to Combroude in Auvergne; but, on his return, granted him a pension of four thousand francs, to console him for his exile. The Abbé Roubeau, his colleague, in the *E'phémérides du Citoyen*, was sent into Normandy; and as he pleaded the excuse of poverty, for not being able to betake himself to his retreat, fifty

louis-d'ors were paid for his expenses. The government conceived themselves under the necessity of having recourse to these punishments, in order to stop all writings which related to the public welfare.

The adventure of M. Delisle, which happened at the same time, is of another nature. Two magistrates, burning with zeal for the holy tabernacle, and among the most enlightened of those who were in the parliament, proceeded to search for works of philosophy. In a short time, they bought as many as amounted to fifteen thousand francs, and caused them to be burnt, in order, said the other members jestingly, to expiate the sins of their youth. In one of those searches they discovered the *Philosophy of Nature**,—a work in six volumes, which had been approved, and printed six years. These two words, “philosophy” and “nature,” made their zeal for combustion still more ardent, and the work appeared to them a very worthy object of suspicion. They purchased of the librarian, Saillant, all that remained of the edition. They then borrowed the manuscript; but, in confidence, it was carried by

* La Philosophie de la Nature.

two counsellors of the parliament to the advocate-general of the Châtelet, who seized and condemned both the work and its author. Although it was a sort of philippic against M. Delisle, who composed it, he was imprisoned, and sentenced to perpetual exile, and the confiscation of his property.

The confiscation of a proscribed man's property is absurd; for there are few who wish to live, after being deprived both of their honour and their fortune: if he be a philosopher and a man of courage, he will deprive himself of life: and if a theologian, and not deficient in resolution, he will do the same. The parliament of Paris, however, annulled the judgment of that of the Châtelet, and restored M. Delisle to society, to his country, and to all the rights of citizenship. Delisle was no sooner liberated than he went to stay sometime with Voltaire. Our philosopher was enjoying the satisfaction of affording an asylum to a man of talents under persecution, when Joseph II. of Austria passed near Ferney. He did not visit its owner, and proceeded on without seeing him. This might have been mortifying; but Voltaire never testified any disappointment; and the subsequent homage he received in the capital fully counterbalanced this slight.

He had been absent from Paris for thirty years, and was now verging towards his eighty-fourth. His appearance was venerable, and he was living free and happy amongst a people whose opinions and views he had formed and directed, and whose benedictions he was in the daily habit of receiving. In 1777, he united in marriage the Marquis de Villette, a man of considerable property at Paris, who was on a visit to Ferney, to Mademoiselle Varicour, the daughter of a gentleman of Gex. For this young lady, who was brought up under his eyes, he had the tender anxiety of a father; and her beauty and goodness of disposition gained her the appellation of *bonne et belle*, of which, says Duvernet, she is still deserving. In the society of the Marquise de Villette, Voltaire found the cultivated and pliant conversation, which recalled to his mind the days he had formerly spent with the Chaulieus and the La Fares.

In the course of the same year, Voltaire had sent to Paris the two tragedies of *Irène and Agathocles*. The actors were not able to adapt themselves to the characters, and this misconception on their part rendered him impatient; making light of mistakes in trifling things was not one of the virtues of our philosopher.

Yielding therefore at once to the different inducements that called him to Paris ; to the Marquise de Villette, who had returned thither with her husband ; to the exhortations of his friends, who were most of them very old, and desirous of seeing him before he died ; and, perhaps, yielding still more to the ambition of seeing himself applauded upon the first theatre of Europe, he set off in the midst of the most severe winter, and arrived at Paris, at a time he was least expected. In this he hazarded his life. On the road he was willing, as much as possible, to dispense with all honours ; he could not, however, avoid those of the postmasters. They did not dare to trust him to their postillions, but accompanied him themselves. One old man, who was not able to drive, after having intrusted him to his servant, said, " Consider the honour you have in driving this great man ; and although there are ten kings in Europe, there is but one Voltaire."

On his arrival at Paris, on alighting from his carriage, although he was overwhelmed with fatigue, and in spite of the inclemency of the weather, he ran on foot to the house of the Count Dargental, to whom, for forty years, he had given the name of Ange Tutelaire ; his soul burnt again to see and embrace this old friend.

In the interval of a few years, most of the sovereigns of Europe had visited Paris; but their arrival had given rise to much less wonder and agitation than that of the philosopher of Ferney. In all the public walks, theatres, and places of amusement, nothing was mentioned but his arrival. The French academy sent three deputies to welcome him, instead of two, as was usual, at the head of whom was the Prince Beauveau; —the rest of the academy followed their representatives.

The French comedians went also to pay him their homage. Voltaire replied to them, "Gentlemen, I live only by you, and for you." Mademoiselle Clairon, like a second priestess of Apollo, cast herself at his knees, in the midst of a numerous assembly. The ministers sent congratulations; a great number of courtiers followed their example; and the men of letters made this pleasure their duty. During a considerable time, the philosopher was the subject of all conversations; his observations were repeated from mouth to mouth. Franklin, who was, at the time, ambassador from the United States of America, one of the great men of the age, and of the first who disseminated the principles of liberty throughout a nation, came to see him, and brought his son to re-

ceive his benediction. Voltaire placed his hand on his head, and exclaimed in English, "God and liberty."

Whilst these honours were gratuitously heaped upon him, his health experienced an alteration; and the alarm was increased at Paris, when Tronchin, his physician, announced in the public papers that those who loved him most would soon be the accomplices of his death. By degrees, this danger passed away, but other fears succeeded. A report prevailed that the Archbishop of Paris petitioned Louis XVI. to order Voltaire to leave the capital. It was also mentioned, that M. Seguier had an order to denounce him to the parliament. Voltaire, although he was still unwell, received the actors and actresses, who were to perform in *Irène*, at his house. They rehearsed before him as he lay in bed; and, at this time, he sat up a whole night, correcting the fifth act of the tragedy.

During one of the rehearsals, he broke a blood-vessel. The Abbé Gaultier came to visit him, but required a public profession of his faith, and the wits in Paris wrote a parody on the priest and the profession. The day after the visit of the Abbé, he recommenced the rehearsals of *Irène*, of which he had not a very favourable opinion; and it was on this occa-

sion, that he observed with pleasantry, "It would be sad for me to have come to Paris, only to be confessed and hissed*."

This play had already arrived at its sixteenth representation; but he had not been able to attend, although perpetually called for by the public. The illness from which he had just escaped (which is dangerous at all ages, and generally mortal at so advanced a period of life), added to the interest which the public took in him, and rendered them more solicitous in their visits. Two sentinels were placed at the box-door of the gentlemen of the bedchamber to the King, where he sat with the Marquise de Villette. He had hardly entered, when the spectators rose, some incited by the pleasure of seeing him in better health; others by the respect they considered they owed to a philosopher, who had filled all Europe with his fame and literary glory. This was the first homage he received. The audience then simultaneously clapped their hands with excessive joy, and a thousand voices from every corner exclaimed, "Let him be crowned." Buzard, the

* "Il serait triste pour moi de n'être venu à Paris, que pour être confessé et sifflé."

actor, who performed so well the character of a high priest, in obedience to the public voice, proceeded to the coronation. The modesty of Voltaire for some time hesitated in receiving the honour,—the first of that sort hitherto known in France; but at last he accepted it amidst cries of “It is the public that sends it*.”

Shouts of applause continued till the close of the theatre, indeed for nearly four hours. During the two representations of the tragedy, and the after-piece, the comedians paid him a compliment, equally unexpected by himself and by the public. It was the inauguration of his statue. The curtain rose, displaying, in the middle of the stage, his bust, done by Caffieri, and placed on a pedestal. All the actors and actresses, each in an appropriate dress, were grouped in a semicircle around it, holding in their hands a crown of laurel, after which they chanted the name of Voltaire at distinct intervals.

Madame Vestris, advancing to the front, addressed some verses to him, which were twice recited, and each time, the acclamations were re-doubled. Then,

* “C’est le public qui l’envoie.”

each actor, passing, and inclining towards the statue, placed a crown of laurel upon its head. Each coronation was hailed by the audience with shouts of applause. After this performance, the enthusiasm still continued during the rest of the evening ; and, on his way home, he was preceded by persons hailing him as the Sophocles and Homer of France. On his arrival at the court-yard of the hotel of the Marquis de Villette, he found it full of his admirers ; and, turning to the public, he thanked them for the honours they had heaped upon him, “ and the glory,” added he, “ under which I am going to expire*.”

In 1770 a clergyman of Paris preached against the statue they had raised to him ; and another of Saint André des Arts, thought it his duty to preach against the coronation. The force of the enthusiasm, however, drowned the remonstrances of the priests ; and what would, at another time, have caused much discussion, was now hardly noticed.

A number of engravings were struck off relating to this event. Among the figures introduced are those of the poet Fréron and Guilbert. The latter is said to

* Et de la gloire sous laquelle je vais expirer.”

have been so violently affected at the demonstrations of respect shewn to his enemy, as to become deranged. On his recovery, however, in a fresh fit of frenzy, he swallowed a key, and cried out, in expiring, "Say nothing about it to the philosophers."

Paris and its tumults soon became burthensome to one broken down with age and decrepitude. The honours, of which he had to a certain degree become satiated, left a void in his heart, which study, application, and the desire of seeing those in whom he was interested happy, could alone fill up. His dependants at Ferney sighed for his return, and indeed offered to convey him on their shoulders the whole distance: but the pleasure which he received in the society of the Marquise de Villette was a strong tie on his affections; and in this state of uncertainty he undertook the task of contributing to the formation of a good French dictionary, which he had proposed to the academy; a work which was at that time essentially wanted. Each member had a letter assigned to him, and Voltaire undertook the first, A.

Continued labour during the night, and a very free use of coffee, to prevent sleep, threw him into a fever, to relieve which he had recourse to opium; but, hav-

ing taken too large a dose, he fell into a lethargy, from which he never completely recovered. Whilst he was in this state, he heard that M. Lally Tolendal had procured the repeal of the sentence, which had caused his father to die on the scaffold. This news raised him from his stupor, and he replied to Madame Tolendal, in a note, of which the following was the substance: "I see that the King is just; I die content." This was the last letter he dictated. His torpor now became continued and complete: he could not articulate, and seemed to be insensible to every thing around.

The Curate of Saint Sulpice, and the Abbé Gaultier, who had formerly attended him, being made acquainted with his danger, were permitted to see him in the presence of his niece, his nephews, and his friends. The curate approached the pillow of the dying man, and asked him whether he had faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ. The philosopher was insensible, and did not hear the question; or, if he did, did not deign to answer. The curate profited by the silence to explain to his friends and his relations his reasons for such a demand. "As," said he, "in the works attributed to him, the divinity of Jesus Christ is

strongly attacked, I think it my duty to acquaint myself with these points of his belief." M. le Marquis de Ville Vieille then addressed him, and thinking that he should not be heard, cried in his ear with a loud voice, "Here is the Abbé Gaultier, your confessor." The philosopher, probably delirious, to the great astonishment of the assistants, replied, "The Abbé Gaultier, my confessor; pray make my compliments to him." They then announced the curate of Saint Sulpice. Voltaire is said to have raised himself from his bed, and extended his hand for salutation. When the clergyman said, "Sir, do you acknowledge the divinity of Jesus Christ?" he replied, "For the love of God, do not mention that man's name." These were his last words; at which, observes Duvernet, "All free-thinkers will be very much delighted, but which are certainly calculated to make Christians shudder."

The Curate of Saint Sulpice, no doubt alarmed at this reply, retired, and announced to the rest of his fraternity at Paris, that Voltaire had died as great a Deist as he lived; that he would not bury him; and that, if the commands of his superior obliged him to perform the office, he would have the body dug up during the night. This report, although not very probable,

as it was mentioned publicly, I have thought it my duty to record. It may be also right to contradict a common belief that was then circulated, which said, that as soon as the Abbé Gaultier had left the apartment, Voltaire raised himself on his pillow, and repeated the four following lines :

Tandis que j'ai vécu, on m'a vu hautement,
Aux badauts effarés, dire mon sentiment,
Je veux le dire encore dans les royaumes sombres
S'ils ont des préjugés, j'en guérirai les ombres.

This anecdote is false, as well as many others, then in circulation. The verses had been written ten years before, and when Voltaire was in the full enjoyment of health. It appears like an idle boast his repeating them on his death-bed ; but the truth is, that he died peaceably, with the resignation and calmness of a philosopher. His body was embalmed, and carried at night out of Paris to the convent of Sellieres, of which his nephew, Mignot, was abbot. His heart was sent to his friend the Marquise de Villette, enclosed in a sarcophagus, which was placed in the chamber in which he used to study, and on which the following inscription was written : “ His heart is heré, and his genius is every where*.”

* “ Son cœur est ici, et son esprit partout.”

Opinions have been, and are likely to remain, various, with regard to the real state in which Voltaire expired. His friends describe him as sinking into the grave like a philosopher : others, among whom are the physicians in attendance, describe him as suffering great agonies, and terrified by his approaching dissolution. Between two such different accounts, probability might induce those unbiassed to incline to the former. No doubt the opium which he had swallowed might cause delirium ; and the religious would magnify indications of weakness, to which the strongest minds are liable, into fear of a future existence ; whilst d'Alembert would be unwilling to allow, that the tortures of his body on so trying an occasion would ever cause even a temporary perversion of his sentiments.

The writings of Voltaire were composed in quiet and seclusion : and, from all that can at present be judged, indicated his genuine belief. Their coincidence with those of others ought not to be on this occasion the question. No one would all his life deliberately maintain what his reason decided to be false ; and the state in which a man dies, is not always a fair criterion of the vigour of his understanding, or an estimate of his fears

for future welfare. Physical force supports the mental faculties ; and even tranquil resignation to fate is not always accompanied by devotion. A saint has been known to expire in torments ; and Sir Thomas More jested upon the scaffold.

The death of Rousseau soon followed that of Voltaire. His obsequies gave no trouble. M. de Girardin, at whose house he died at Ermenonville, caused his body to be carried to a small island in the neighbourhood, where a mausoleum was erected amidst some poplars, which soon became an object of curiosity to strangers, and of veneration to his admirers.

The following account is given of Ferney, in the work of M. Lepan, by a person who visited that place in August, 1817. "All the lands which form the domain round the house, about a league in extent, have been sold by the heirs to different Genevoise, or French proprietors. The garden and surrounding plantations are not worthy of being dignified by the name of a park. The high trees, which are seen on the right on entering the gardens, were planted by Voltaire himself, and are those under which he used to repose. The trees opposite to Geneva were also planted by the philosopher of Ferney. M. Burette, a Genevoise gentleman, the pre-

sent owner, has made openings from different points, in order to enjoy the view of the country. As to the present shape of the garden, it resembles in nothing the former arrangement. M. Burette, having built a very fine front, it was necessary to uncover all the land, which was before it, and to substitute for those plantations a large platform covered with grass, which is surrounded by trees. As to the interior, two rooms only, on the first floor, the parlour and bed-room, have been kept in the state in which they were at the death of the former owner.

“ This is all that remains to be seen in the local distribution. Neither the shape of the parlour, nor its ornaments, are remarkable for their taste. It is arranged in the style of architecture which was in fashion under Louis XV. The sitting-room, besides, has a mean appearance ; and it is difficult to conceive, that it could have contained the number of the curious who visited the author of *Zara*, when he performed his plays. As these amusements only took place in summer, it is probable the visitors walked about in the gardens, till the actors began to perform. The furniture of the bed-room is in its original state. This is also very small. The walls were covered with

tapestry from Lyons, which is still seen. The canopy of the bed was of the same stuff; but nothing remains of it; the religious of all countries having taken away small portions.

“Two pictures are to be seen on each side of the bed, the one on the right represents the Marquise du Châtelet, and the other the Empress of Russia. The bed was opposite the garden, and has not a view over Mont Blanc, as one might suppose from Voltaire’s correspondence. On each side of the window are still seen the engraved pictures of all the philosophers of his time, such as D’Alembert, Diderot, Helvetius, Thomas, &c. We might also notice the picture of a little peasant, of whom Voltaire was very fond, and which is not without merit.

“After his death, Madame Denis erected the small monument which is seen opposite the chimney, on which this verse is engraved,

His virtues are here,—his genius is every where*.

The main front of the house is very elegant. In 1765 (the year in which it was built,) he wrote to M. D’Argental, speaking of the building, ‘It is of

* Ses vertus sont ici, son génie est partout.

Palladio quite pure*.' Indeed, its lines are correct, and its ornaments well drawn; but the building is badly disposed on the ground. The house is parallel to the high road which leads from Geneva to Gex, and it ought, on the contrary, to have been placed opposite to Geneva and Mont Blanc. The result of that bad situation is, that the beauties of the architecture cannot be seen, on account of the trees, which hide the entrance; and, towards Geneva, whence the habitation is observed at the distance of a league, it only appears to be a small pavilion. Before entering the house, on the left, you see the small church, which Voltaire built to impose silence on his enemies. Between that church and the mansion was the play-house, which has been demolished.

“ Ferney, so celebrated for more than twenty years during which time it was inhabited by Voltaire, and constantly visited by the great and learned, is now almost forgotten. Some admirers still pay their homage at his shrine, but they do not discover the residence of the muses; no echoes repeat his verses; and the alteration is complete. I visited

* C'est du Palladio tout pur.

Ferney myself in September, 1820, and found it much in the same state as described by M. Lepan. On one side of Voltaire's bed, there is a picture of himself, and, on the other, of the King of Prussia. In the sitting-room, there is a curious tablet also after his own design, in which the author of the *Henriade* is represented ascending to the embraces of immortality, while a host of enraged critics are plunged mid-way in a morass, which is supposed to represent oblivion,—a striking example of vanity, and a humiliating instance of the weakness even of a superior mind."

The author of so many works of different kinds was, at the end of his life, not only the undertaker of a manufactory of watches, and the temporary father of the Capuchins of Gex, but also the manager of a theatre; for he had one built at Ferney at his own expense, where Le Kain was to perform, according to an agreement made with the Sieur Saint Gêran. He was the director of that operation, which Madame Denis said her uncle thought the finest enterprise in the kingdom; and consented, at the age of eighty-three years, to communicate articles to the journal which was edited by La Harpe, and printed by Pan-

coucke. He wished it to be kept secret, and transmitted several extracts from new works.

Voltaire was of a middling stature, and very thin. His countenance expressed wit, mingled with malignity. His eyes were small and vivid, and characterized the activity of his disposition. His address was frank; he was very agreeable in society, but did not like appearing there except in the evening. As he advanced in age, his appearance gained much in dignity and reverence. During his residence at Ferney, he generally wore a loose, dark-coloured dressing-gown; a white satin waistcoat, full wig, with a small black cap. He was extremely kind and attentive to all young persons; often stopping to converse with the children he might accidentally meet. He used to dine almost always alone in his own apartment; even during his residence with the King of Prussia, he visited him only at supper-time. When he enjoyed the society of persons with whom he was at his ease, his conversation was lively and entertaining. It was a combination of witticisms interesting reflections, and learned discussions, without pomposity, or pedantry.

He spoke with plainness, and distinctly, and was

desirous of finding the same qualities in those with whom he conversed. One day, he received the visit of a learned man, who was in the habit of speaking fast, and between his teeth; the first phrase which Voltaire did not understand, he told him politely, "I beg your pardon, Sir;" the next he did not answer; and to the third he said, with warmth; "but speak in such a way that I may understand you." This vivacity exhibited itself in all his actions. Dorn, at Frankfurt, had very nearly fallen a victim to his impetuosity; and a bookseller of the same town suffered, but in a less serious manner. He had brought a bill for works which he had sold, and not being able at that moment to speak to the master of the house, it had been left. When Voltaire saw it, he found the sum required was for copies of his own works, and was enraged with the attempt at imposition. The bookseller came back in the evening, while Voltaire was walking in the garden with his secretary; he immediately went up to the librarian, and gave him a slap in the face, leaving to Collini the task of explaining to him the cause.

His impatience to finish a work was extreme: it was as soon begun, than he desired to see it

finished; and it was scarcely finished, before he desired to see it printed. He used sometimes to commit to the press works which were but half finished. His method was to compose as he was correcting the first sheet struck off; "because," said he, "the mind seems more enlightened, when the eyes are satisfied." When in health, Voltaire used to write his own compositions; when indisposed, he could dictate with as much facility as he could write when well. But it was only his correspondence that he used to dictate in this manner to his secretary. As to the works, he was in the habit of writing them himself, as he composed them; and afterwards got them copied. Collini said, he never could catch him in the moment of composing verses.

Towards the latter part of his life, Voltaire never used to eat in the middle of the day. He supped between nine and ten; ate little and slowly; went to bed between eleven and twelve, and slept about four or five hours. He sometimes, notwithstanding, spent sixteen or eighteen hours in bed; but when a thought came into his head, he used to ring the bell for his secretary, whose room was just underneath, and who was obliged to be ready to write any thing he should

dictate. During the night, he had three wax-candles burning near his bed. Upon being asked how he could have finished so many works, he replied, "By not living in Paris." It may also be added, that his fortune enabling him to have well-informed secretaries and transcribers, he employed the time which is, in general, spent in making extracts, or in copying manuscripts, in planning new compositions. Father Adam, an old Jesuit, who remained in Ferney about fifteen years, did not confine himself, as was said, to playing chess with the master of the house ; he helped him in making researches, and in extracting from Greek and English translations, which he understood very well.

M. Durey de Morsan, an old counsellor, and member of the academy of Nancy, from whose accounts Duvernet is said to have written the life of Voltaire, was also very useful in making extracts of the Italian and Spanish translations, which he knew perfectly. This person was very much attached to Jean Jacques Rousseau, with whom he had lived at Neufchâtel. He one day wrote the following distich beneath his picture, which was under a crucifix :

Ante meos oculos pendet tua, Rufe, tabella;
Pendientes colitur, sic mihi forma Dei.

Voltaire, having entered the room while the other was absent, and seeing the verses, erased the last, and substituted another, so that the distich remained as follows :

Ante meos oculos pendet tua, Rufe, tabella ;
Sed, cur non pendet vera figura viri ?

Durey knew Voltaire's hand-writing, and pretended to take no notice of the change. Our indefatigable author said jestingly, speaking of his habit of being able to apply to so many different works at the same time: " Shall I always be like Harlequin, who wished to exercise twenty-two trades at once * ?"

We have seen Voltaire with his friends, his protectors, his favourites, with his critics, and with his panegyrists ; but we have not yet seen him with his family. If we except Madame Denis, to whom he did much good, and Madame Fontaine, his other niece, who became Madame de Florian, and to whom he wrote often, he spoke very seldom of his relations. His eldest brother, the companion of his infancy, was only mentioned in his correspondence,

* Serai-je toujours comme Arlequin qui voulait faire vingt-deux métiers à la fois.

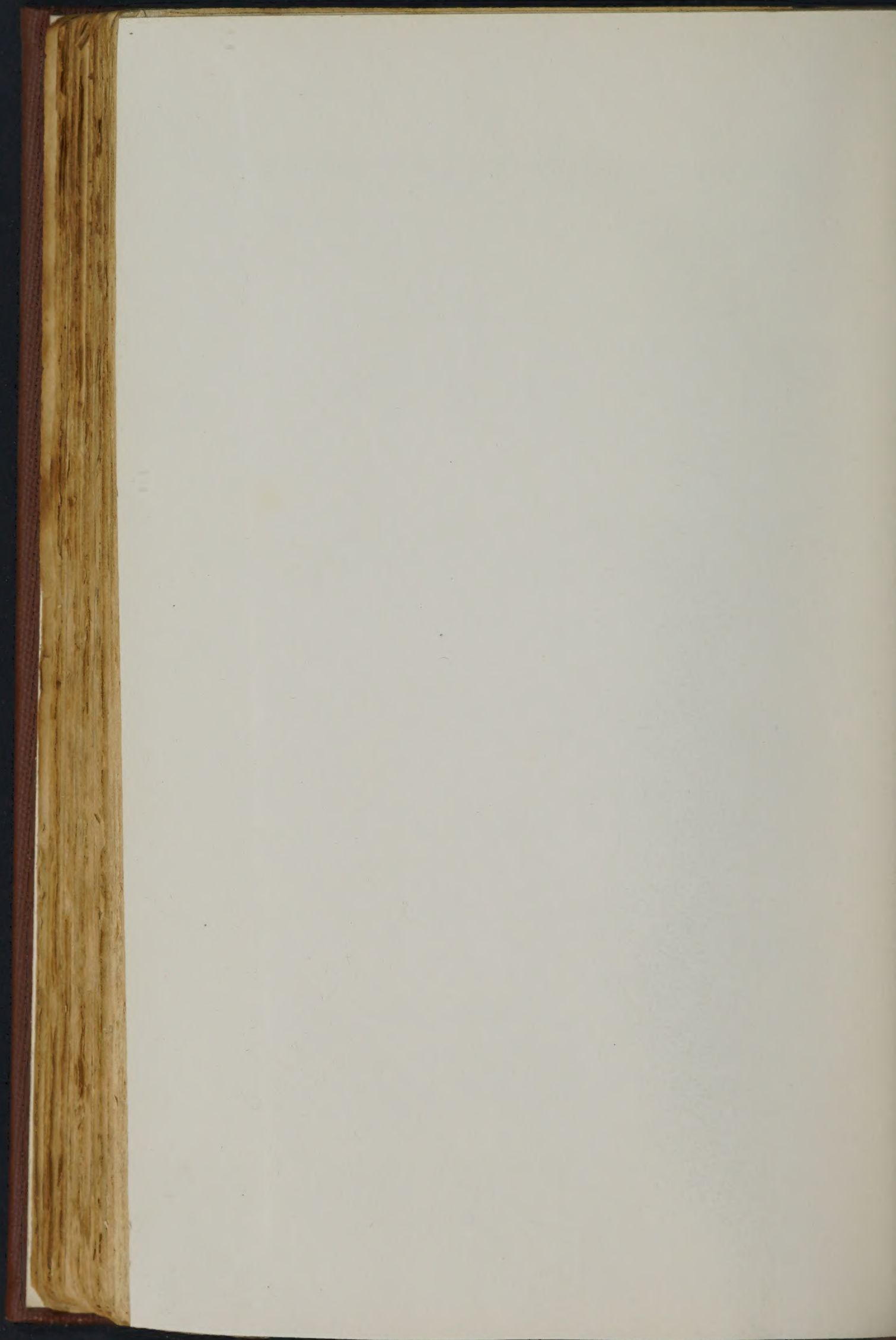
as a debtor for an income, which he was desirous of having regularly paid.

We may now proceed to say a few words on the most leading characteristics of the intellectual faculties of Voltaire. Those which appeared most prominent were genius, great fertility of imagination, and a peculiar happiness of diction, which of itself fascinates the reader, and embellishes the subject. In the *Maid of Orléans* and *Candide*, he has displayed greater powers of ridicule, and acquaintance with life and manners, than any writer with whom we are acquainted; and the *Life of Charles XII.* indicates a classical taste in the author, and a purity of style, worthy of the ancient annals of biography. As a poet he has been censured for monotony of tone, so that the perusal of his softest verses soon becomes fatiguing. He does not appear to have possessed great profundity, or extent, of knowledge in the dead languages, and his acquaintance with Greek has been sometimes with justice questioned; but the power of his abilities placed him almost beyond the reach of criticism, and from a comparison with D'Alembert we may more easily appreciate the characters both of the master and disciple.

D'Alembert was always on his guard; cautious, prudent, and afraid of a defeat. He proceeded, enveloped by clouds, and preferred seeing his enemies fall by the stratagems he had planned, to the risk of an open engagement. If obliged to encounter an adversary, it was with the reluctance of a general who makes a sally from his batteries. Voltaire was bold, hasty, and intemperate: fond of pomp and splendour, he preferred defeat to flight, careless of his own safety if he could inflict a wound, and ready to sacrifice his person upon the victims he had slain. In their attacks upon religion, D'Alembert may be compared to Paris, who, favoured by concealment, slew his adversary while kneeling at the altar of the gods: Voltaire to Cambyses, who, irritated by superstition, wounded the idol of the Egyptians, regardless of the consequences.

THE END.

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